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★ Miss Jane Moorhead

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY
EDWIN LEITCH LUTHER

AUTHOR OF "A GARDEN OF EDEN"

CHICAGO: THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

1905
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EDWIN LEIBFREED

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A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

AND OTHER POEMS

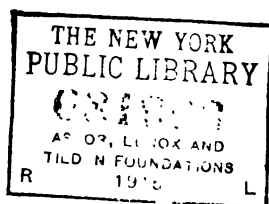
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BY
EDWIN LEIBFREED, Ph.D
AUTHOR OF "A GARLAND OF VERSE" AND "POEMS"

NEW YORK
PUBLISHED
BY

1915
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WAVERLY PRESS
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THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO MY MOTHER
HANNAH LEIBFREED-LEWIS
THE INSPIRATION OF WHOSE LIFE HAS BEEN
FELT ON MANY OF ITS PAGES.

RECEIVED
JAN 10 1900
NEW YORK

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A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

BIRTH

“No, no, no!” cried the Beautiful Cloud,
And the Whispering Wind went away,
But it could not forget the Wonderful Cloud,
So it came back the very same day.

For a love in the sky, you must well understand,
Keeps up an unending desire,
And a moment down here is eternity there
To the lover who seeks to aspire.

So the Whispering Wind came a-wooing again,
And the shy Little Cloud turned so pale,
For this wooer had taken a lover’s shrewd way,
And threatened to blow a great gale.

Then he seized the white Cloud and hurried away,
But he held her quite close to his breast,
And kissed her with love and hungry delight,
And the Little Cloud knew what was best.

Then the dainty, white Cloud, so the story goes,
Grew as fair as the light of the morn,
Till the sun burst her heart with a great flash of joy,
And—that is the way I was born!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

MEMORY

I bear her, a sensitive burden,
A sprite from a wonderful land,
Through many a mystical garden,
O'er many a magical strand.
Her song is a musical shuttle
That speeds in and out of Life's loom;
Her breath is the fragrance of myrtle—
This maid of perennial bloom.

From realms of a Dreamland Èlysian
That flaming rose-torches adorn,
She comes on a delicate mission.
Of heaven her kinsmen are born.
She comes to me bearing a message
That only my soul understands,
Revealing the perilous passage
'Twixt Life and Love's far-away lands.

Her laugh is the ripple of story,
The rhythm of some glad event;
Her converse the metrical glory
Of love-laden words eloquent.
Her eyes are the mirrored remembrance
Of joys that have happened to me.
While I am her hero of romance,
A minstrel of silence is she.

For she is a caroling treasure,
A song of the long, long ago,
From the beautiful garden of pleasure
Where sonnets of sentiment grow.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Her heart is a wordless emotion,
The sigh of a tender refrain;
She warbles with cadenced devotion
The chords of some echoing strain.

Her soul is a spiritual ember
Plucked out of the heart of a star;
A rapture that helps me remember
The wonders she brought from afar.
A vestal with garments a-glistening
Is guarding her undying flame,
And I am an eavesdropper, listening
To Melody whisp'ring her name.

CHILDHOOD

String not my harp with Apollo's golden hair,
But with the sweet memories of my childhood.
My heart and the child's never grow old,
Else could I not play with children
When I go home.
I understand the savagery of the child's struggles,
The barbarism of the child's blunders;
The civilization of the child's conscience;
The astonishment of the child's adolescence.
Through all of these have I, the larger child, gone,
And from all of these do I still learn.
Life is the tamer of the wild beast of humanity,
But all that it does for us at the last
Is to preserve the child heart in each.
Play-time and the children's voices—

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

What operas can approach these!
Sing me no higher praise than that I loved children.

Make for me a violin of the swaying boughs
And I will sing my song to the music of the wind.
Let me be the simple minstrel of that other day
When as a child I heard music in all things;
When beauty filled my eyes,
And laughter was my playmate,
And sorrow such a stranger
That we never met!

For then built I all my highways among the stars.
My merriest companions were the vagabond thoughts
Of other worlds.
My only occupation to turn labor into play;
My greatest pleasure but to live;
My one ambition to be happy.
Those childhood days when I possessed
The caprice and candor of a cloud;
When my vision had the lustre of a star;
And the glory of a rose-leaf
Was my richest estate;
When all my joy was in an awakening wonder!
Alas! the cloud has vanished away;
The star has grown so dim;
And all my simple joys come not again;
There are no more wonders to enchant,
And all that is left of my once beautiful rose
Is the memory of a perfume.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

With what tragic pathos do all men regard
The child grown old whose heart cries!

THE DEATH OF A DAY

Twelve chances of gold and twelve hazards of lead,
And the life of a day forever is dead.
"Forever is dead! Forever is dead!"
A crooning old sibyl immemorially said.

Twelve fortunes of fate and twelve friends to relate,
And Remorse to be thumbing the latch of a gate.
Then the plaint of a phantom, "Too late! Too late!"
And the death of a day to narrate.

Jewels a score and yet other four
Lying unclaimed on a carnival floor;
A shadow returning and counting them o'er;
Then the wail of the wind, and the dirge of a door.

THE LESSER DEITY

Home!
By what magic comes this spell?
What wand has touched these humble walls,
And made them glow as with a holy warmth?
What disembodied spirit glorifies the place?
Whose feet may claim the phantom echoes
That bring once more a thrill?
Whose memoried voice is this that holds
More sacred music in its roughest note
Than ever came from seraph's throat?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Whose spirit hands are these
That hold a balm for pain,
And work the miracles of wonderland?
This hallowed spot is shapen like a shrine!
Yea, my very heart has taken on its form.
What subtle peace that only sea-depths know
Abides within this sweet retreat?
Lo! She has come in answer to my call,
And once again I see the heart of God
Incarnate in a woman's form,
And feel the presence of that Lesser Deity
That won my worship as a child,
And all the world stands uncovered at her name—Mother!

ALL-SOULS INN

To All-Souls Inn have we come as travelers,
And put up.
To know its bed and board is not to know all.
The beauty of its setting, the reason for its being,
These must be compassed ere we resume our journey.
The Master of the Inn will not act as guide.
Then let me seek out him who has learned
Its secret haunts and its laughing wonders.
We are jaunting through the Eternities.
'Tis but a brief season of rest at the Inn.
Let it not be a place to be regretted,
But a spot to look back upon
With subdued emotions.
To the stranger and the sojourner
Let me bid a welcome. He has come from afar.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

He is stained with the star-dust of other worlds.
I would show him the orbit's swing of this one,
And make him at home.
Let me prove to him that his coming was timely,
And that the place is not forbidding.
Desire and necessity sent him here.
Most of all his coming was that we should meet.
But for his coming, all eternity
Would have left us unacquainted.
How sweet the meeting-place of Souls in Time!
Whose hand rang the chimes of this Happy Hour?
I prefer him, with his gentle voice and kindly eye,
To all the great philosophers of the dusty ages.
For I know him.
They are not even memories, phantoms only,
And they know not me, nor care to know.
But he cares. He is touched by all that touches me.
He weeps with me.
He laughs with me.
He sings with me.
How eagerly I awaited his coming!
God alone knows how I stood at the window
Of the Inn peering into the darkness,
Straining to catch a glimpse
Of this mate of my soul!
Through all the mist of events
And the twilight of uncertainty
I watched and waited, and I said,
"He will come." And lo, he is here!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Let us see to it that we register
Good and honest names of homely dignity
At the Inn,
And that we leave no unpaid debts of duty
When we are gone.

Whose feet make echo on my heart's unsteady stairs?
I bid you halt. You are not welcome here.
My love and I would sleep.
I cannot think 'tis best my love should be disturbed,
Not knowing of your coming.
What sudden fear you put within my heart!
It cannot be my love makes ready
To be gone with you!
My love, my love, I cannot give you up!
Wait one more day—one little day—
That I more reconciled may be.
Alas! the feet of angels who attend on Love
Turn never out from their true course!
If go you must, then for your sake
I stay my tears, and stifle every sob.
Let me see you off just as I saw you come.
Long after your form has vanished in the darkness
I will be looking your way
Remembering!
Farewell! and let no other music greet your ears
Than the memory of a day well spent.
And when we meet again, give me that best reward
That comes to mingling souls,
And say, "I understand."

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

THE MARKET-PLACE

I would shop with you in the market-place of Life.
Together let us buy the secret of the stars;
The perfume of souls;
The wine of sweeter worlds;
A painting or two of dreams
Sketched by immortal hands;
A cloak of snow-chaste charity;
A few books from the Library of the Heart;
A poem or song drawn from the air;
A coverlet of rest from the loom of night;
A jewel from the casket of Truth;
A tapestry woven of heart-throbs,
Passions, and sweet regrets;
A lamp with the inextinguishable light of Love;
A few shoes of adventure;
A top-coat of celestial awe;
And a psalter of human praises;
And then, let us pay for it all
With the uncounterfeited coin of contentment.

SHAME

When Life was a child she was wronged.
He was a man—in years.
He took her unawares.
She was too young to forget,
And too honest to pretend not to know,
And too much afraid to cry out.
He laughed as he saw her weep.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

When first we pay the price of wisdom
With innocence,
We are too shocked to understand.
Then later must we sit and wonder
Whether it was worth the cost
To know what every one must some day know
And knowing, ever after be afraid,
And filled with shame.

YOU

I do not see you.
I see only an angel in the rubbish.
How inexpressibly it thrills me!
How my joy passes out of the realm of words
Into the language of the universe—music.
The vision of you puts me into the silences of song.
How our happiness startles the world!
It brings a smile to the very face of God.
The years of eternity have been lengthened
By the memory of you.
The very rubbish in which I found you
Holds my reverence.
How eagerly do I look into your eyes
That there, perchance, I may read
Love's first message dictated by the Soul,
And know that you are mine!

And you were seeking me?
Well I, too, am in the rubbish.
I am discoverable.
But you must dig deep.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Here. Take the silver spade of sincerity and dig;
When you have found me,
Lay Love's golden magnet over me,
And I will rush to you as the stars to their places.
We are of the same household.
Our distant relatives are those who have been
And gone.
I kiss *you*.
I forgive and forget your body.

THE LIBRARY

Into the Library of God I walked on a day
When I was tired, worn and hungry quite.
Tome after tome of light stood on its silver shelves,
Each ancient book tight shut,
And with a clasp of ebony upon it.
The Man who noiseless walked about the place
Gave me the books to read.
And when the Eyes of Search fell on them,
The clasp of ignorance dropped back,
And I could read.
And most of all I read of Him who kept the books;
But all his writings were concerned with me.
Then a wondrous book brought he to me and said,
"When emptied quite of things, read well and long;
For in this book you may find what you seek."
Enchanted by the title, long I read,
Regretting when the closing chapters came.
It was "The Book of Life;" the hero, I,
Outlined on every page as with a light.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

And looking close I said, "It is not I,
But some one so like unto me, I swear
That if not I, then someday it shall be."
And the Man gave me the book to read to you.

MY SENSITIVE SOUL

Souls are such sensitive things.
I am sensitive to the shadow of a shadow;
To the thought of a thought;
To the hurt of a hurt;
To the love of a love;
I came not by such a temperament
Through chance. The heart that can be quickened
By an unsaid word, understands
And will not hurt.
But the wise man drags not his soul after him
On a string for other people to tread upon.

ASPIRATION

If Aspiration could make an angel
She would give her the wings of wisdom,
The face of friendship,
The feet of freedom,
The heart of hope,
The head of humility,
The hands of helpfulness,
A body of beauty,
And have her wear a smile of sympathy,
And a crown of courage;
But ambition would make her the fool of fortune.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

THE NEWS

The news I get of God is from the stars—
Fresh Morning News of world events.
The pages blaze with light of distant spheres,
And not one line of war or hate,
But only volumes filled with plans
Of peace, good-will.
And reading, I forget myself,
And dream and dream,
And in the dream I see a form like mine
That bids me read,
And haste to tell what I have learned
Of news so foreign to this waiting world.
And though men stand amazed
At what I read to them, and ask if it be true,
Yet soon enamoured of the message
Do they haste away to publish it abroad,
Changing the words, but forgetting not the sound
Of that one note that woke their souls to life.
How eagerly do men await the Morning News
Of Life!

And then the Evening News of late events
And plans to be;
Of greater worlds and possibilities,
And endless life, and you and me,
And all of God. And then a soothing prayer
To end the page, and make me glad to sleep.
How good the News!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

THE HOTEL LOBBY

A place of much decoration and little circumstance,
Where melt the spring and winter of life—
Beware of the fog.
Nearly every thing about me is in its dotage—
Only the ogle left!
Lights, lights, lights! Gorgeous glamour and glare!
What a relief a dash of darkness would be!
What has become of Youth?
Without 'tis the season of apple-blossoms,
And lilac bloom.
Soon the wistaria will have shed its purpling petal,
And the lilac plumes will be scorched in the sun.
Then June will have taken me unawares—
June with her flaming rose-torches,
And deep luscious fragrance;
Her bitter thorns, pricks and blood!
And ere one knows it, the Summer of Youth
Will have been and gone.
Then the trees will have become delirious
With the red wine of Summer,
And the trembling leaves
With their reeling, madcap ways
And their sun-burst hues will fall about me
And make me sad.

Was that a touch of rain?
Or a saucy, white angel masked as a crystal of snow
That tried to kiss me on the mouth
As I opened the door?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

I only know 'twill soon be time to go.
And yet this Hostelry of Life
Will keep on with its business
Of burning up Youth and Time and Hope
Long, long after I have gone!
Strange that a thought of Arcady
Should have slipped in through the door
With that little gust of wind!
Or is this Arcady?
And have I missed its meaning?

THE GHOST OF THE UNSUNG SONG

'Twas not as stories go, "Once on a time,"
Nor yet as poems run, prattling with rhyme.
Music, it seemed like, shivered of tune,
Or like a summer-day robbed of its June.
Thus did it come to me sitting alone,
At even when Twilight ascended her throne.
All that I know of it, gladly I tell,
Conjuring visions and weaving its spell.
Thus did it come to me, living, unreal,
Wraith-like, yet human, making appeal.

Into my windows, jangled, unstrung,
Tuneless, yet bearing the heart of a song,
Dropping in tears like a silver-spun rain;
Filling the air with an anthem of pain.
Cleansing my soul, yet disturbing my calm;
Charging my heart like a world-moving psalm;

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Finding me out with its dreaded reproach;
Conscious of grief, and its right to encroach;
And yet it was music subtle and sage,
The music of birds unharmed by a cage.

Music that dwells as the soul in all art—
Emotion that haunts to the innermost part.
Poetry, heaven-born, only restates;
Sculpture, more human, but well imitates;
Painting lends life with its colors to forms;
Acting gives speech and laughs and performs;
But music is soul—the life of all art—
Existing in substance, of matter no part.
This was my visitor, stately, sublime,
Pulsing the air with a dissonant chime.

Welcome it was not, and yet undismayed,
It paused not for greeting, it stayed unafraid.
It burst my room's limits, expanding unbound,
And bore me away on the wings of a sound.
Into the past—Life's chamber of death—
Filling my soul with a sepulcher's breath.
Awed into silence, I waited to learn
Its cryptic lament and solemn concern.
Then to my soul, shuddering sudden with fear,
This was its message, this it made clear.

“Living in paradise, years gone, we met,
You were a harp-string of gold, jewel-set.
I was a breath of music, untouched,
Eagerly waiting your hands to be clutched.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Passionately hovering, ever in view,
Pleading to sing my song to you.
You tore your harp-string out of your heart,
Banished me, left me a thing apart,
And now I must follow you day by day,
For no other harp will my song obey."

THAT NIGHT

Oh, the extravagance of a God
To waste his silver on a slumbering night!
What ravishment and bliss to have found the Night and Thee,
When those mystical, golden hours were chimed away
In the melody of thy voice!
Slipping away from under the lace and broadcloth
And the roofing places of flesh,
Two white Souls romped and played
All oblivious of convention's restraint,
And the foolishness of fear.
One long, eager look into the purposes of Life,
Then bounding away in the spirit of adventure
To the heights of thought,
The deepening, softening night luring them on!
The cold, clear stars unashamed and unafraid,
Urging with their winsome glances
Those child-like hearts to venture where
The lure of light and love might lead.
Then the darting behind the dark rocks of duty
In a wild gambol of hide-and-seek,
To pause for breath and new courage
To attain the heights.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Those ever-living, ever-loving Souls always understanding,
Linked together in their bursts of laughter,
To be unfettered once again
In the daring of aspiration!
Then that mystical call, wordless, yet
Echoed by all the ages.
Then the lying quite silent
Like foolish bees drenched with the pollen
And the burden of their own sweetness,
Trying to creep back again
Under the cover of the silver-slippered Dawn
To the commonplaces of Life and the morn.
That frosty morn chilling with its own necessities!
Then the vanishing of the last shadow of Night
In the all-searching, inquisitive Sunlight,
And the guiltless answers of two Souls on trial
For the episodes of a never-to-be-forgotten night!

The matin songs of the birds—
Those honest witnesses of the breaking Day—
And then the renewing, gladdening effect of added life,
And wisdom gathered from a night that carried Souls afar.
The confidence of strength in the contemplation
Of the new Day's cares and perplexities,
And the suggestive strains in an undying note
Of a minstrel of the sky, perched aloft,
Peering into the measureless azure, with head atilt,
Trembling with its passionate call to the mate of its soul.
And the unerring answer from the shadows—
The chirp of joy that knows the bliss

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Of being waited and watched for!
What night so sacred to bird or soul as one
That ends in the meeting-place of Love
'Neath the soothing, softening influences of the dreamy Dawn!

MY SECRET

I keep my secret. It is mine.
You who would search it out for sport
To flaunt it cruelly and laugh,
I bid you fear discovery.
My motives are not in my faults.
Only my failures there are found.
Such as I am, I am. No more.
Nor otherwise would dare to be.
My faults came with my goodnesses—
A setting made by other hands—
'Tis well that I am thus equipped,
Or else, forever robbed of force,
I be no more a living thing.
We know the day because of night,
And joy because of sorrow's price.
Not like some pauper's graveless corpse
Dissect my soul to find me out.
The tendons, nerves, the red channels
Of my warm blood, leave these to me.
My secret does not live in them.
Back in the ages long ago
I drew my heritage of life,
And now fulfilling it I do
The best I know without regret.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Mistakes? Ah, yes, a multitude!
But I will point you out far more
Some higher being made or I
Would not be as I am at fault.
Enough! Perfection is not ours,
And glad am I. For life is best
In the unfinished, growing state.
And revelation to disclose
Mere fault and failure would not give
One moment's joy, while goodness must.
For I attain to self, and self
Leads unto God who made me thus.
So let me be, my secret mine,
And yours as sacredly your own.
I will forgive, and more, forget
Your erring ways, but never once
Your idle aims, all curious,
To know not me, but that which makes
A shadowed background for my soul
So white to stand in bold relief,
And show itself as only I
Can show myself to you and be.
See how this scarlet sin of mine
When blended with some golden deed
Will give to it a warmer tone
And much more sympathetic touch!
My sins are mine. My good deeds yours.
Leave me my faults. They harm not you.
Who knows but what they may be meant
To prove how beautiful you are!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

WHEN MEN ARE GLAD

God made a man
And said, "Now Life begins."
Time brought a woman
Saying, "Mine be her sins."

The woman stood revealed.
The Present was her name.
The Future lay concealed
Within her mortal frame.

Then brought she forth a son—
A wide-eyed child—
Time said, "The Future hath begun,"
And smiled.

Then laughed the woman loud,
And Time increased.
The child grew very proud,
For Life had pleased.

Time brought the child a toy
Of Hope, and said,
"This bringeth endless joy,"
And fled.

Life said, "A foolish token
To provide."
And seeing that the toy was broken,
The child cried.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Then Life began to play
Upon a harp of gold.
The child was half-past day;
The woman very old.

And God felt human pain,
And music filled the air.
For sorrow is sweet gain,
And grief a seraph's prayer.

For music only sounds
When God is sad.
And discord most abounds
When men are glad.

And long the woman wept
Until the music died.
Time said, "No joys she kept,"
And sighed.

Then Time rushed by
And Life said, "Lo, the Past!"
And God drew nigh
In silence vast.

Then looked the child and saw
A vision of light,
And filled with solemn awe
Said, "Best is the night!"

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Then came the Past—a ghost—
From scenes afar.
Life heard the child make boast
Of having found a star.

Its childish hand it oped,
And saw the star was dust.
Life moaned because the child had hoped.
Time fled, afraid of lust!

Then God the silence broke:
“There is no Past,” said he.
“The Future in the Present spoke.
Time is Eternity.”

The child began to weep.
The woman kneeled to pray.
The Past fell softly into sleep.
God said, “Let music play!”

THE WILD ROSE

Into my Life's garden I walked
In the heat of the day, and there
Found thee a forgotten Wild Rose
Overlooked by hurrying men.
To thee spake I as to a friend:
“Would'st thou know immortality
And joy of life? Then hear me out.
Thou art a Rose and I Man's Soul.
Apart we may not thrive, for thou

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Hast need of my extolling eye,
And I thy presence day by day.
Thy life I can renew, and thou
Canst bring me a creator's joy.
Make then with me this day of days
A solemn compact born of love,
And let us seal it sacredly
In a covenant of promise.
Thy body's precious juice and mine
Distilled, shall pour as wine of life—
The essence rare of higher things—
Wilt thou attend and serve with me?"

Obeisance made the rose and smiled.
Then all my holy gifts I brought,
And as the days went by I gave
My broken body—fittest thing—
And all my thought as rich red wine.
The rose transfigured grew as with
An inward light, and brought to pass
A hallowed glory and a grace.
And I, embodied joy, was thrilled
By what I now beheld; for where
A wild rose bloomed with joys a few,
There grew a many-petaled flower
Radiant, and with fruition's
Holy dream fulfilled. Then spake she,
"I have obeyed, and thou hast kept
Thy promise and we both are glad.
Henceforth shall I be unto thee,

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

And unto all men, who behold
And understand the mother-heart,
The soil of life where Love is sown
That flowers into God, himself."

SPIRIT IMMORTAL

Soul without taint of transgression,
Spirit immortal and white,
Be thou my princely possession,
Shine as a star in my night!

Banish my recreant masters,
Body and Mind, false and fair,
Thou who canst temper disasters,
Bid me no longer despair.

Mind with thy vaunting obsession,
Body of hindering clay,
Grant to my Soul its expression,
Give to the Spirit its way.

All that is stately, supernal,
Dwelleth in thee, oh my Soul,
Thou art to me the Eternal,
Perfect, impartial and whole.

Monarch unthroned, I recrown thee.
Long be thy reign in my heart.
The kingdoms of Mind and Body
Yield to the uttermost part.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Thou who retainest the vision
Caught in the realm of the pure,
Utter thy royal decision,
Keep me forever secure.

Heart of the Infinite Purpose,
Will of the Way and the Plan,
Teach me acceptable service,
Show me the God in the man.

Out of the Ultimate fashioned,
Out of the Verities formed,
I am thine own, all impassioned,
Muted, transfigured, conformed!

Soul with no limiting mansion,
Soaring as free as a dove,
Be thou my heaven's expansion;
Be thou its Light and its Love!

THE SOUL'S OUT-OF-DOORS

We have no right to be content with cooping sky.
Until we break through the roof, and see all out-of-doors,
And then know why,
We shall not have earned a right to exist.
Until each Soul shall be a lighted lamp
There will be one spot in heaven
Too dark for God's bright eyes.
Who knows the grief of men? Only men.
And men must end it.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

God waits to hear only notes of joy.
If God has any craft, it is Soul-making,
And I need not fear for quality or style.
Until I burst the restraint of body,
And broke the chains of mind,
I knew not that I had a Soul.
And now I send my Soul
On errands 'round the world.
But oftenest it stops at the Forge of Time
To see God at work,
And hear Him tell of some new world-wonder,
And back it comes to me to eagerly report the news,
And waiting not for hat or coat, I rush to tell it to you.
If Souls must be born, as are bodies,
Let us await the travail of suffering,
Be patient, expectant and mother-glad
When we feel life under the heart.
Build me no hill to cumber the glad earth
When I am gone,
But mix me with the flame, so like my Soul,
And let a last flash of light mark my departing way.

THE POET

When a poet is born
A new ray of light shoots across the world,
And God is at both ends.
Poetry is the flame of Life caught in a lover's lamp.
Poetry has the smell of the soul about it.
The poet is an acolyte at the altar of Truth.
Poetry springs full-grown from the heart.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Prose spends a life-time
Growing in the flower-pot of intellect.
Poetry grips the soul and never lets go.
Poetry is more than word-pictures,
It is world canvasses.
Dictionaries and encyclopedias are not needed
To interpret poetry. The soul, alone, can read it.
Only the heart can find the heart of things;
The mind sees only matter.
The poems that live sing to the heart.

THE PLAY

When Acting, that talented, fascinating daughter
Of the Drama was born,
Then her sisters, the Song and the Dance
Came to complete a merry household.
All the purpose of soul-birth dwells in Expression.
Until the Soul can play, and sing, and dance,
It has not attained its full measure of happiness.
If the leaves of the trees can clap their hands
And be glad,
It is fitting that the Soul express itself
In every form of joy.
What an ancestry has this mobile child—The Play!
Daughter of the Drama, grand-daughter of Literature,
And the great-grand-child of Expression—
The Soul's first-born!
Nature puts her abundance in a crucible
To produce a gem.
Into chaste crystals does her alchemy resolve itself.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE .

When words become to us as precious jewels,
When speech has become Lincolnized,
We, too, shall have copied nature's soul-method
Of gem distribution in sacred places.
Unless the Play with each performance
Shall stir the Soul to greater deeds
It is unfit to hold a place.
Unless the Play shall so mix the tears and smiles
As to purify the Soul of its travel-stain,
And make it glad for having lived,
There is no reason for its being.
Repression of Soul is the unpardonable sin.
If not the creator,
Then let me be the interpreter of the Play.

THE CRITIC

They say I am too bold! Who say?
Those arrant cowards who do but employ
Wild words to cover up their own deceitful deeds.
Yet who, beneath their breath, will often say
What I dare say to God, himself,
And yet be unashamed.
Those sentimental rogues who feed
With flattery from one hand
While the other is used to sharpen
The dull dagger of destroying criticism that is
To be driven into the unsuspecting back
When one's white Soul is turned.
Bold! Will you offer me any manifestation
Of Life that is not bold?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

That River running its majestic course!
Did it ever try to hide the
Truthful sparkle of its face
From any villain's sight?
Those naked Clouds! Did they once say,
"We must not be so bold as to appear
Before the eyes of this too modest,
Staring man?"
Those rugged Mountains! Did they shrink
Back into the earth crying,
"We are afraid to let you see our bodies
Blackened by the struggles of the years
With heat and cold and the driving
Furnaces of earth's internal fires?"
The chaste Snow! For whom did this
White, mantling angel ever gather up
Its stars of heaven-dust, exclaiming
"Unclean! Unclean! Away! On us
Is found a blemish by this holy man
As on all things else?"
The blithesome Birds! What songster's throat
Is silenced because you as silly critic
Much prefer to sleep?
The silver Rain! When did fearful hesitation
Ever make it cease to wash and purify
Your filthy way as down it shot?
The ceaseless Sun! Did it subtract
One small degree of burning heat
Because your silken skin
Was blistered by its unthinking ray?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

The silent Stars! Has ever one of these
Run from the sky because you said
You liked not its all-too-inquiring eye
Relentlessly peering into the casement
Window of your secret sin?
Your Better-Self that is too much ashamed
To sleep with you o' nights!
Was ever compromise made with truth by it
In any contest you put up?
The functions of your Body! The soiled
And soiling machinery of your being,
Did this cease its grime of labor, its honorably
Dirty work to please your fastidious notions,
Or to spare your all too-delicate hands
Dishonored by selfish leisure, and
The soft ways of enervating indolence?
Your putrid Breath! Did it refuse
To make announcement of impaired digestion?
Or warn you with its nasty notice-sign
Hung so often on the property
Of other people's sensitive nostrils?
I say did it?
Your Body's stench in protest of neglect!
Did that patient and all-forbearing servitor
Hide its offensive odors behind
The perfume of deceit?
Your snarling, biting, noisy Watch-dog of Conscience
That you tried to strangle
With sly strategy and sickening show,
Did it give up its midnight yelping?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Your faithful Friend who fearlessly
Met face-to-face you and your fault,
Did he keep silent for the price of friendship?
No, I tell you!
These all had courage and were bold.
These all spoke out,
And if you had been a man
You would have taken me unto yourself
As fireside-friend.
But rather have you so deceived yourself
That your clean Soul has laughed you into shame.
Your starving mind has so long played you
The fool and cringing vagrant,
That it serves as beggar and has taken alms
Of other men's ideas and thoughts,
And pawned them as its own,
Selling the tickets for the price
Of a cheap advertisement of self.
Your Heart treats you as would
Any other mistrusted servant.
The disdainful elements ignore you
Till Nature tosses you aside as useless,
Awaiting her gravediggers, Disgrace, Disease and Death
To put you into oblivion's sepulchre forever.
Your pure white Soul shamefacedly denies
It ever knew you, and goes up to God
To render its account of you—
The unutterable cipher in the eternity
Of its existence.
Bold Bah! You have not heard me yet!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

In the swaddling clothes of effort
Does the human Mind make answer.
I await the time when Soul
Attaining the stride of God shall summon
You to account.
For the irreverent swagger of your contempt
And contumely makes the rectitude
And courage of conviction
The stride of Deity, himself!
My soul's opinion of you is reserved
Until that solemn day when it must meet
Your Soul and with condolence speak
Of the unworthy vehicle you made of life
In which a God was meant to be expressed
Through miracle-working Truth!
Would I were bold enough to be so honest
With both you and myself in thought and speech
As to some day build a House of Friendship
In which we twain might dwell forever!

ATTAINING GOD

Life is imperishable.
Change is eternal.
Monotony is death.
The soul includes a universe.
Immutable laws must govern mutable life.
Man's imperfections certify to laws,
And hinder none.
There is something higher than law.
Law is a product of mind.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

The intelligence that creates law
Is greater than its product.
Intelligence is the soul of life.
But the soul of life is faultless,
And yet knows no completion in anything.
It, too, must grow.
A progressive soul is as natural
As a growing body.
Progression is an attribute of all life.
Perfection and completion are cessation.
Cessation is death.
If God be a perfect, finished being,
He is at an end.
Finality is fatal.
Perfection is inconceivable.
Perfection in God or man is wisely unattainable.
A deity advancing, expanding
Is more comprehensible than a completed being.
Conception can embrace life,
But not death.
Mind grasps immortality more easily
Than finality.
Change and variety express infinite possibilities.
The imperfections of the universe
Are the surest proofs of an attaining deity.
Who would limit God?
Let us not make God.
Let us attain Him.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

BOREDOM

I believe that insanity and inanity
Are more to be desired than ennui.
That optimism is a liar,
And pessimism a traitor,
But Truth is an unfailing friend.
The balm-vender fools himself,
And the optimist runs at the first disaster,
But Truth remains at the post till the finish.
The satirist is an honest truth-seeker,
And the agnostic builds more often than he destroys.
To hope is not to know.
To seek is to obtain.
The deaf and dumb in intellect
Are more to be pitied
Than they who have neither ears nor speech.
Plato hoped, but did not know.
And honest doubt gives Truth a royal welcome.
Calm and suicide are not antipodes;
More often are they sequences.
There is no sensation in a laugh;
A Joke is only a cracked truth.
The Calvaries and Gethsemanes stir.
Bethany is but a place to rest.
The Christs and martyrs have pushed history along.
No crown-wreathed king invites an artist's study;
But brush and paint are flame
When the burden-bearer and the hero pass.
Better to be a jester in the Court of Life
Than the king who cannot weep.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Sensation, not monotony is the background of life.
Boredom is life's most fatal malady.
Let us hang convention, that murderer of originality.
Better a universe explained away
Than one built upon lies.
Variety is the furnishing of heaven;
Invention is its raw material.
He who carries no stones to Valhalla
May not hope to sit beneath its shadow.

PATRIOTISM

A patriotism that limits itself to a country
Is treason to humanity.
See to it that your patriotism is a religion;
But let your religion include a world.
The forum that excludes any truth is a jail.
And the jailer is Hate.
To be a great orator, one must have a great message.
To be a great artist, one must have a great ideal.
To be a great lover, one must have a great soul.
Empty life of things if you would be happy.
Possession fills the place that belongs to joy.
Thinking of things stifles the spirit.
We are free from pain
When we put matter out of mind.
We must pay the price of our loves,
And the dearest price we pay is for
That human thing to which we pin
Our animal affections.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Recurrent appetite proves satiety is unnatural.
We are in eternity.
Time is our schedule for arriving.
Life is our first stop.
It is our Land of Promise.
Ignorance is its wilderness.
The human heart is the rock therein.
It needs not to be smitten and broken.
Just a word, and it will gush forth waters of joy.
Conscience is the Prophet in Life.
Suggestion is its Law-giver.
Ideal is the leader.
Fear is the first river to cross into the Promised Land.
The body is the first city to be taken.
Our sins are the shadows cast
By our swords of victory.
Confidence is a ruler of kingdoms;
And that thing is wrong which is contrary to one's nature.

WAR

There is no justification for killing anything
Except wrong.
There never has been a holy war,
But there have been many honorable defenses.
A common catastrophe wipes out social distinctions.
We laugh at a common loss,
And groan over a personal one.
They who witness Death in Nature are not alarmed.
They may be saddened, but are never troubled.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

The victory of mind is final,
But of might is unsettled.
Seek not the serenity of surrender,
But the calm of conquest.
And see to it that blood is not the price.
He who makes all of Eternity loses Life.
But he who makes all of Life lives forever.
Righteousness carries no sword.
Reverence for Life forbids it.
The world is not a jail, and Life is not a prisoner.
The only birds I shall ever cage
Will be Love and Joy.
I would imprison these in every heart.
Now is the accepted time of happiness,
And now is the day of its distribution.
Put not that scourging cancer of fear
Into my Soul—Fear, that father of all war!
War! War! The ribbons of your banners
Are made out of broken flesh.
A mother's heart is in every bullet you shoot.
Your camp-fires are lighted by dead men's souls.
The red fountains of Youth feed your rivers of gore.
Your battle songs are the wails of wives and sweethearts.
Your martial music is ripped out of the breasts
Of dying men.
Every shell you fire crashes into heaven
And destroys some sacred shrine.
You bring down your human game
With the blighted lives of children.
The groans of the dying

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Are the curses of future generations upon you!
Why have you chosen Death as your commander,
And Hell as your country of conquest?
Know you not that Heaven is vacated until every war
is over?

HISTORY

History is not authority.
It is the world's time-piece run down.
I treasure the past, but live in the present.
Any genealogy that traces a Christ back to Adam
Deifies man, and humanizes God.
Whatever triumphs are yet to be won,
Men must achieve them.
The living, and not the dead, must command.
Help men. God is above need.
Paradise lurks in a hand-grasp.
Heaven dwells in a smile.
We are making history every day.
More's the pity when we come to realize
We must read it.
Most of us are only blasted rock.
A very few shall serve as cathedral windows.
The feet of twilight are as soft as death;
The feet of dawn are washed with the tears of night;
But the feet of History are red with blood.
Names perish with the marbles.
And when we cease to rear monuments
To warriors we shall build Temples of Peace.
There must be one last war,

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

But God will not be in it.
Every man is the symbol of the universe,
And every Soul requires a forerunner.
Ah God! How long it has taken history
To prove that Truth requires no bleeding sacrifices.
Ask me not to destroy myself for you,
But to live for you.
Weaken me not with pity.
Strengthen me with commendation.
Destroy me not with flattery,
But deliver me from obscurity.
For every soul has a message,
And the histories of the future
Will narrate the triumphs of Truth
And not the deeds of destruction!

REVELATION

All revelations are mysteries restated.
God is no greater mystery than man.
Man is a revelation of God.
Keeping soul and body together is less a task
Than keeping soul and body apart.
Not what am I, is of prime importance;
But who am I?
To answer this makes me an intimate of God.
Ignorance is voluntary.
And is not wisdom?
The physician of the soul is Punishment.
Knowing one's self is the beginning of wisdom.
Trusting one's self is the use of wisdom.
But trusting another is the delight of wisdom.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

God gives no instruction in life.
We are self-taught.
A crisis is a crown when it reveals God.
Let us welcome the affliction
That brings us nearer to Him.
Education is not knowledge;
But love is wisdom.
Books are filled with knowledge, but none of them is informed.
Pain and sorrow are the schoolmasters of Life.
We are sick of your empty phrases, Oh Religions!
We have spewed them out,
And will not return to our vomit.
We have tasted of the Wine of Truth and live.
Your many protestations, your wordy efforts
Have brought on your failure.
No path of argument or taunting threat
Will ever bring us back.
Freedom is too sweet a heritage
To be put again into your careless keeping.
I like no more your begging prayers.
To truly pray is to petition one's better self—
The God in each of us.
One look at the Soul, and how proud we would be of God!
The vista of a purple hill and an emerald valley
Is better than a fearful faith.
The babble of a brook is more honest of sound
Than the anathema of a priest.
The fall of man includes the fall of God.
I am above such blasphemy.
Silence is golden when error speaks.
We hear the music of the universe if Truth so much as whisper!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

A GOOD FIGHT

What a warfare is Life!
The Soul is eternally fighting sin.
The Mind is forever combating error.
The Body maintains a ceaseless struggle with death.
With what strange weapons do they contend!
The Soul carries the shield of Love.
The Mind brandishes the sword of Truth.
The Body wears the armor of Life.
We learn most by our failures.
Success only cheers.
But suffering strengthens,
And sympathy softens.
The Issue of the Soul is an ideal.
The product of the Mind is a truth.
The fruit of the body is another vessel for the Soul.
The body of the universe is matter.
The mind of the universe is life.
The soul of the universe is intelligence.
In such a trinity have we all the promise of unity.

THE DISBELIEVER

Life you say is all trouble and disappointment.
Is this a mood or a daily attitude?
If it be but a mood, we will cleanse
The clogging sewage with a physic.
But if habitual, let us engage a metaphysician,
And deal with this matter seriously.
Come sit down with me.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

I have all eternity to talk.
Time is the tested coin of my realm.
My coffers are so full I live in affluence.
I spend my wealth in giving joy.
Perhaps that is why Life to me is such a precious thing.
I regard it as the rarest jewel
In my casket of unpriced gems.
It is not strange to me that you
Have found it but an irritating nuisance,
And an imitation of the thing you thought it.
You have made Life an artisan
When its sphere is that of the artist.
I wonder would you take a journey with me?
Let us go back again to the beginning of things.
Let us sweep away all matter with one great thought,
And find ourselves once more alone with chaos,
Just you and I. All about us lies
Unclaimed and unassorted knowledge;
Deep after deep is filled with laws so wonderful
They appall with their magnitude;
Seas and oceans rolling with unfathomable love;
Great, seething currents of undirected emotion;
An ether filling every available space, and
Surcharged with the lightning of spirit;
A pulsing animation so vital pervading the void
As to stir us into action.
What material from which to build worlds!
And only you and I as silent witnesses!
I had almost forgotten you in the contemplation!
Then, suddenly, I see you reaching out with spirit hands

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

And taking hold of a thought.
It throbs with such delight in your grasp
You do not let it go. You fondle it.
It takes shape in your eagerness,
And soon you are moulding knowledge into being,
And your ambitious hands reach out again
When I find you assembling laws, and draping
Them about the being of your creation
Till you no longer feel the fear of loss,
And setting it free, you gain omniscience
That bursts upon you with such force
You exclaim in rapture "Behold!
The universe sweeps through me!"
And all there was of actuality was you—
The creator, the veritable God—
In this labyrinth of possibility and circumstance.
How reverently, now, you start about your high-born duties!
You take the smallest, yet the greatest thing you find—
A thought—and send it everywhere,
And returning to you it brings as its first conquest,
Beauty. Again it urges forth, and coming back
It is adorned with wisdom wondrous fair.
A quest it makes again, and coming home
It radiates the light of joy;
And looking close you see it glistening
With strange pearls of dew, the essence
Of renewing life that generates a multitude of things.
And animating all its being is a new force
That you name for later recognition, Love.
Now look you! how you, yourself, do grow

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

And take on cosmic purpose, and lay your plans
Of infinite design!
I see you rearing great structures built of knowledge.
The bricks and blocks of your material
The many books of spirit minds.
And through your own being runs all law
And force to be translated into beauty.
Ecstatically, now you go about your tasks
And bring variety out of cause and effect,
And sequence and promise out of principle,
And perpetuity out of purpose.
Then aspiration leads you to such heights
You can not bide the selfish contemplation
Of the glories that you see your hand has made;
Then happiness drops from you at each step
Till other life springs into being all around.
Then comes your greatest work to make you glad.
Harmony pervades all things,
And turns creation into everlasting joy.
Then became you possessed of a great vision,
And magnanimity seized upon you,
And every wandering thought that moved abroad,
You touched into responsive, happy life;
And rushing back to you came such a flood of joy,
Reflecting but the happiness of all you saw,
That like a great sun you burst upon my own vision,
And Lo! I came to pass!
Then went we forth to see this universe of ideas,
And everywhere thoughts sprang into life
Like grass beneath our feet;

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Giant trees of aspiration pushed their long,
Searching arms into our heaven;
Stars of surprise filled our firmament;
Mountains of motion set the mysteries all a-going;
Seas of Self formed themselves
Into symmetrical sciences;
An atmosphere of action blest us
With adorning variety;
Suggestion stirred everything into a new existence;
Comparison created all consciousness;
Contrast built itself into rapturous music;
And Imagination turned itself
Into musing mimicry and imitating art;
Then began I in all candor
To make account of these things.
And I beheld reality and righteousness;
Beauty and blessedness;
Joy and its flowering justice;
Love and its laughing laws;
Harmony with its symphonies of happiness;
Intelligence with its infectious inspiration;
And Emotion with its ecstasy of endeavor,
And I was happy.
But you shut your eyes and would not look.
So long were your eyes closed, you fell asleep,
And when I disturbed your slumbers, you said,
"Oh, methinks it is but a nightmare,
Or at best an idle dream!"

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

TEARS

"Where did you come from, sorrowing tears?"

"Out of the heart of the suffering years."

"Where did you gather those drops of rain?"

"They were caught in the clouds of human pain."

"Where did you garner those rainbow gleams?"

"Out of the skies of youth's broken dreams."

"Why did you come to trouble's relief?"

"Life's sobs were as thunder, as lightning its grief."

"What is it shines in your watery spheres?"

"The sunbeams of joy that will dissipate fears."

"Why should you taste of the salt of the sea?"

"I have washed human hearts of their misery."

"Why do you burn like a blistering bane?"

"I take out of lives the fever of pain."

"Why should a word make you quick to convene?"

"Some things there are that I, only, can clean."

"Why should you leave no one free from your stains?"

"The woes of a world are washed by my rains."

"Why should the hearts that are lightest feel tears?"

"Joy is a neighbor that sorrow reveres."

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

"Why do you linger when mankind is sad?"

"Only my coming will prove hearts are glad."

"What was your reason for thinking of me?"

"A sigh picked me up from your sorrowing sea."

"Where do you vanish when griefs slip away?"

"Into the sunshine that makes a glad day."

"What is the purpose of hearts full of pain?"

"That tears, like the showers, may blessings contain."

"What is the world's greatest boon you would give?"

"Sorrow, that sympathy longest might live."

"And what shall I do, having found you, sweet tears?"

"Bless me, and say, 'Sadness always endears.'"

THE SACRAMENT

Souls grow in bodies.

I do not know which blesses the rose more—

The earth that bears it or the sun that nurses it.

Is the rose more in the soil than in the sun?

Which gave it the glory of color?

Is man more in God than God in man?

Who desires the other more?

From whom came the wonder of character?

Was it of God or of man?

Is texture of leaf and fibre of tree

Mineral or thought?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Is all beauty in a sunbeam?
Is all error, deformity and decay in the earth?
Is all death in clay and life in sun?
Is it really dust to dust
When the ashes of the rose go back to earth?
The perfume and the color, where are these?
Are they the soul of the rose?
Is character and all its possibilities born in us?
Is the body such a shameful thing
When it can house such a wonder?
We cannot debase the body by use,
But by abuse.
If the soil is holy ground for the rose
May not the body be for the soul?
Expression of body is not only not a crime,
But a divine necessity.
Let us perform the holy sacrament of sex
And be clean!

THE THINKER

Let each of you think for himself,
And not for another.
Independent thinking is an inalienable right.
Every religion has been some mind's invention.
But no one mind holds the exclusive privilege
Of such invention.
Intellectual liberty and spiritual freedom
Are the indefeasible rights of all.
No church, and no set of men
Can be a final authority for Truth.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Humanity is more important than any church.
Fear and superstition are the religions of despotism.
Democracy grants universal education;
Guarantees liberty, and
Promotes peace.
Modern religion insists on a living principle,
And not a dead command.
The authority of a church makes humanity its subjects.
Democracy forbids any authority
Except that of the individual.
So does Truth; so does Liberty; so should we.
The creed that needs defense has already surrendered.
Truth never ought to be made to feel ashamed
Of any creed, belief or dogma of religion.
Creeds have forced their defenders
To apologize for many of God's acts.
Democracy insists on its rights in heaven
As well as on earth.
Truth abhors an embalmed religion
• As nature does a vacuum.
Make your religion so sure that no institution
Can come between your soul and its liberty.
When the church of Christ becomes the depository of Truth,
Christ will be in it.
Until then it will be an institution of usurped authority.
The source of religion is the soul.
The soul is the sanctuary of the divine.
I care not what your religion is,
Only so that you have one.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

THE AWAKENING

The faith of our ancestors cannot be ours,
Any more than their souls can be ours.
Each age must build its own faith,
For faith is acquired, not inherited.
There can be a temple without a priest,
But no priest without a temple.
The sanctuary of the soul is the body;
And the high-priest is Life.
The body of man is born of the earth;
The soul of man is from above.
To be born again, one must be born of heaven.
All beings have bodies, minds, souls,
But there are three births.
The inferior birth is of the body.
When this, only, is born, our body rules.
It accounts for the immoral tendencies.
When the mind is born,
Discernment between right and wrong follows.
But if intellect, only, rules,
Then may the unmoral prevail;
But when the soul is born,
Man becomes a crusader for the right
And is unceasing in his warfare against the wrong.
Some carry their souls to the grave unborn.
In no other way may we account
For indifference to the sacred things of Life.
Birth is an awakening.
Who or what shall awaken the Soul?

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

THE CITY

I beheld a great city of white lights and dark places;
Of luxurious bounty, and pleading poverty,
With a multitude of souls unacquainted;
Women in Babylonish garments,
And men afraid of life;
Streets so crowded, there was no room for God;
Ghosts of reality sitting at every feast,
And a fabric of artificiality draping every shape;
A whirl of life, and a sound of emptiness;
A clatter of activities and a restless sleep;
A frenzy of desire, and a fear of loss;
The advertisement of everything except life;
Fragments of souls flitting about;
Debris of broken hearts;
The pace of death, and the leisure of despair;
Festivity and gayety, and an unsatisfied hunger;
Sounds of revelry to drown the sobs of woe;
The glamour of gold upon all things;
Men slaying each other in a warfare of profit and power;
Children with the madness of life,
Unrestrained, and surrendering childhood
For the burdens of maturity;
A stifling atmosphere, and a longing for freedom;
The hall-mark of integrity upon nothing except simplicity;
Declaration of dividends of misery;
Financial statements showing balances of human fetters;
The manacle of money, and the monocle of monopoly;
Flaming torches, here and there, of a few white souls
Ablaze with Truth, Righteousness, and Hope,

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

Lighting the way to places of safety
As the volcanoes of business and enterprise
Were flinging their ashes of cindered sins upon everything,
And sending their lava-streams of stultification
Into lives that revealed nothing but petrified hearts,
Where unimaginative souls looked out
Upon a flaming inferno.
A few angels of mercy—women bent upon good deeds—
Flitting about binding up wounds,
And helping to redeem lives from destruction;
And the great sweep of virgin country
Beckoning with pure hands and a clean heart
To the multitudes to come unto it and find rest;
The smoke of the city rising
As from an altar of sacrifice,
Where white souls were yielded up daily
To the god of Gold,
And the curses of the city-dwellers tainting the air;
A city as great as an empire, and as cruel;
A city built of human hopes,
And pillared by penury and pain,
And the friendly roof of the sky shut out of all things.
And I said, "They who spend their time in cities
Dwell apart from God and die."

THAT OLD HOUSE OF MINE

How often do we sit amid the ruins of a Memory!
What a wrecker of soul architecture is Regret!
Sentiment, alone, keeps the crumbling ruins together.
Every empty room echoes some heart event.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

The windows with their dull eyes of age
Look in and not out.
Emotion, that tarnished knocker on the door,
Is never sounded.
The children of Gaiety, Pleasure and Merriment
Lie in the little church-yard quite forgotten.
Ambition's fireplace is black with the soot
And smoke of many failures.
And oh! how cold and damp the place,
When I so loved the warmth!
How hungry does it look—this haunted House of Happiness!
Were noises ever heard like these
That speak so knowingly of things
I thought nobody ever knew?
That bat! how it scared me!
Beating its wings so blindly into my face
Just as Ignorance always has done.
Those creaking stairs! I hear the cry
Of every human care as up I climb.
Too sad to weep, I look upon the room
Wherein I slept, and wish that Memory
Had died with Youth!
I, who had such a house wherein to dwell!
For mine was a residence unsurpassed.
I carried no visiting cards. I lived with God.
Our address was one. How small God's family!
God, You and Me!
And yet how oft have I left out you!

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

CIVILIZATION

That is no civilization that breeds paupers.
Poverty is a crime.
It has no more right to existence
Than any other destroyer of Life.
Upon the kind of government
Depends the kind of civilization.
Civilization is not chattels or conveniences, it is freedom!
Government is meant to preserve, not to destroy.
The obligation of government is the welfare of all.
Government is not impersonal.
It is human.
A civilization is neither human nor divine
That shows poverty as its product.
The world does owe men a living;
Or why should men live at all?
Man's theft of the world has pauperized his brother.
The kingdom of heaven knows no landlordism.
We owe it to our children
To leave the world better than we found it.

GOVERNMENT

My Country!
In possession lies immeasurable thrill;
My book, my child, my home, my country.
Patriotism makes holy ground of our native land.
To the power-house of government I repaired,
Eager to learn the ways of justice and control;
To feel the throb of the great engine of the Law;
To study the intricate design of Democracy,

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

And understand the eternal symbols—
Those majestic set-pieces in the pattern of authority;
The solemn affirmations of Truth and Justice,
And the elimination of deadly wrongs;
To see the wheels of government revolve,
And catch a glimpse of the sacred out-put
Of civilization and its institutions;
To behold the great bales of righteousness made ready
For distribution among the common people.
To this House of the Ultimate came I
With searching, hoping heart.
Here I beheld my countrymen in sombre assembly
Unrelieved by the finer ways of women;
The monotony of laws unbroken
By the plea of human needs.
I stood aghast at what I saw.
Laws, laws, laws,
Unmixed with any saving element of love.
I found men bartering away human rights,
And selling justice as the rags of merchandise.

Into this House of Laws I went, waiting,
Hoping for redress of the great evils of the times.
But the business of the day
Was the filling of an exchequer with gold.
The cry of the children,
And the sad plaint of ill-requited labor went unheard.
Into the lesser House I journeyed—
A Babel of voices—
A House of Comments and wasted time;
Long hours devoted to getting acquainted

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

With the multitude of their fellows,
And keeping silence during their novitiate;
The preservation of a horde of wrongs
Basking in the sunshine of authority;
Surprise written upon the unpromising faces
Of so many in this House as they met,
And then their mutual salutation,
"In the name of Liberty! How came you here?"

Then all was transformed by a vision.
I saw a new House of Laws
And women on their knees at work
Cleansing the place.
Eagerly I inquired the meaning of their ways,
And they made answer:
"We are making ready a fit dwelling-place
For the coming of the Right.
We are restoring the Constitution,
The hope of our Fathers."
And there were carried out basketfuls
Of useless, cruel laws,
And the place was made holy again.
Then went I out to see that men
Were instructed in the knowing
That government belongs to them,
Was their most sacred trust,
And the strength and virtue of their country.

THE CHAPEL

Into the Chapel of Nature, come.
Let us attend its divine services.

A SOLILOQUY OF LIFE

The Bells of Time shall toll the hour of prayer.
Before Creation's congregation let us stand,
And be witnesses of Life's holy sacraments.
Here shall we attend the reading of the Book of Life.
The great organ of the wind shall peal an anthem.
Such psalms as birds and waterfalls sing
Shall we hear.

The chorus of the hills shall echo an answering refrain.
The High-Priest of Life shall enter into his Holy of Holies.
Then shall the congregation of the humble
Be heard in praise—

The trees, the grass, the humming insect-life—
And the windows of this House of Prayer
Shall be filled with the smiling faces of the flowers.
The incense of thought shall fill the air.
The deeds of men shall be as morning sacrifice.
Through the aisles of Eternity One shall walk
Who loves all things and leaves no one afraid.
And the light that lights the place
Shall be the Sun of Truth.

The bread of life shall be
The broken bodies of heroic men.
The red wine, the aspirations of throbbing hearts.
Then to the vesper service, come,
Where the silent stars as candles
Shall stand round about the altar,
And a child's hand bearing the taper of innocence
Shall touch them into life.
And the benediction that rests
Upon the kneeling congregation
Shall be the communion of souls.

THE TWO FACES

The story of Leonardo da Vinci's search for the two faces he so ardently desired to represent the Christ and the Judas in his famous painting—"The Last Supper"—now crumbling away in Milan, Italy.

The artist stood troubled. A face would he find
To put in the picture—a face strong and kind.
The painting awaited the form of a Christ
To sit with the twelve at the great Eucharist.
'Midst high-born and lowly da Vinci made quest
For worshipful subject with holiness blest.
No countenance worthy, the fleeting years brought,
To serve as the Master whose likeness he sought.

A solemn recessional heard he one day,
And noted the choir boys filing away.
The face of an angel on one did he see,
And begged him to sit for the picture to be.
The canvas transfigured was hallowed by one
Who gave to the picture the grace of God's Son.
And yet was the painting unfinished, for there
Was needed a Judas, and so everywhere
He searched for the face that would fittest convey
The unhappy man he had meant to portray.
But years left him waiting, the search unpaid,
Till once on the street found he one who had strayed,
Whose bearing depicted a treacherous heart—
The face of a craven well-suiting the part—

THE TWO FACES

And urged him to pose for the unholy man
The canvas required to finish his plan.
The artist grew busy with brush and with paint,
And sinner was outlined in contrast with saint.

"I sat for you, sir," said the subject at last,
"When you needed a Christ for the holy repast,
For mine was the face in the picture that day,
But that was before I had wandered away."
"Yours," cried the artist, "the face of the Christ
I coveted so for the blest Eucharist!"
"Yes," sighed the outcast, "indeed I am he,
The boy you regarded so reverently."

In everyone's face will be found soon or late
The Christ touched with love, or a Judas with hate.
A sacrament, worthy, is life to each one
Who comes to the feast as the friend of God's Son.

THE KID AROUND THE CORNER

Dedicated to United States Senator Moses E. Clapp

He's "the kid around the corner,"
And in everybody's way.
And his mother—how they warn her
Of his convict fate some day!
What to her are laws, whose breaking
Brands her child a criminal,
When his little heart is aching
For the joys so natural?

He's the "worst boy," so they call him;
Grown quite hardened to his name,
For the words no longer gall him,
Bring no more the tinge of shame.
He's the city's proudest scorner
Of its laws against his play,
For "the kid around the corner"
Is in everybody's way.

He pre-empt's the streets and alleys
And he laughs with impish glee
As his cohorts make their sallies
On the corner grocery.
What's the difference who's the owner
Of the things cribbed for the "camp"
To "the kid around the corner"
When the pavement's cold and damp?

THE KID AROUND THE CORNER

Steal a box and build a bonfire;
Let the foragings begin;
To the joys of life aspire!
Being playful is no sin.
What though windows do get broken
Playing baseball in the street?
The excitement is the token
That the game was worth the treat.

And "the kid around the corner,"
When the cops come into view,
Is by far the "champeen" runner
If they ever should pursue!
And he doesn't mind the order—
"Hey you! Get away from there!"—
He just moves a little "further"
Up the street or anywhere.

He was playing "peggy," dashing
Through the street—a common tale—
When a heavy truck came crashing
And the lad lay limp and pale.
Someone picked him up all bleeding—
Sorry for him possibly—
There was little he was needing
Now of human sympathy.

Though he knew that he was dying,
Yet his only words were these,
"Tell my mother—she'll be crying—
Not to worry, won't you please?"

THE KID AROUND THE CORNER

Someone said, "The kid's a-goner;"
Someone else was sobbing loud;
For "the kid around the corner"
Has a friend in every crowd.

Oh, ye men who build the city,
And forget the children's need,
We bespeak some human pity,
And for playroom do we plead.
Think of her, the saddest mourner
Fo the child killed at his play,
And "the kid around the corner"
Always in somebody's way.

Like the days of Bethlehem's manger,
When the selfishness of men
Crowded out a little stranger,
Childhood pleads for room again.
And we pray God, who's no scorner
Of the tears in eyes grown dim,
That "the kid around the corner"
May find room up there with Him!

THE STAR IN HER CROWN

A sweet little face with its wondering eyes
Quite filled with concern and a baffling surprise,
Was watching a mother who, robing one night,
Adjusted her jewels so sparkingly bright;
Till more and more beautiful seemed she to grow,
This mother adored by the little one so.
The brilliant tiara shone brightest of all
As the Beautiful Lady stood dressed for the ball.
"Mother, dear mother," the little one said,
"There isn't a star in the crown on your head.
When *I* wear a crown, I want it to be
As bright with the stars as the sky one can see!"
Then into the eyes of the mother a fear
Crept ghost-like and tarried most hauntingly near.
Strangely foreboding, she gazed on the face,
Then patted it gently with delicate grace.

On Beautiful Lady and queen of the ball,
How oft have you answered society's call!
How many times, too, have you left her alone
Who thought of you wistfully when you were gone!
The wheels of the carriage were grating below.
My Lady, my Lady, and must you now go?
"Good night, little one," then kissing the child,
She gracefully rode 'neath the stars undefiled.
Unrest seized the mother while whirling away.

THE STAR IN HER CROWN

The voice of her baby seemed ever to say,
"There isn't a star in your crown, mother dear!"
'Twas all that the Beautiful Lady could hear.
The ball-room resplendently burst on the sight,
But somehow the gems lost their brilliance that night.
Oh Lady, my Lady, a wonderful star
Is fading away where the sunbeams unbar!
Now the queen of the ball was touching the arm
Of her escort with something akin to alarm.
"Dearest," she said, as he saw the tears come,
"Take me to baby. I want to go home."

So back from the ball-room they journeyed to one
Who never again would be waiting alone.
Ah Lady, my Lady, how dull are the gleams
In the crown you lay by where the morning-light streams!
Then somebody whispered, "The baby is ill."
And somehow the darling seemed wondrously still.
And somewhere the roses her cheeks wore as bloom
Were gone evermore from the little one's room.
Swift kneeling, the mother her child's golden head
Pressed close to her heart, and she sobbingly said,
As tears of contrition coursed rapidly down,
"I want to be, dear, the first star in your crown."

THE RIDE

On! On to Cathay!
Wild ride and the lure of the way,
Till it ends at night
In the lonesome light
Of a moon that haunts the bay,
On the road to old Cathay.

Untamed rider, and horse to flay,
Far-famed journey, and winding way,
Where a thousand years
Lift their foolish fears
On an unnamed road where shadows stray—
The ghosts from old Cathay!

And the horseman hastes away
To the hills that fringe the bay,
And for willing toll
Gives a wan, white soul
To the gateman grim who makes men pay—
The keeper at old Cathay.

Swift race with no relay,
Mad pace without delay,
Rider and horse come in all spent,
And sleep for the night in a starless tent,
At the end of the road where the tollman grey
Sees never a traveler retrace his way
Who rides to old Cathay!

IF YOU KNEW

If you knew the ache
Of that one mistake,
You would not weep for my heart to break.
 But your tearless trust,
 And your judgment just,
 Would brush from my soul its dash of dust,
And never once forsake.

If you knew the rest—
How I did my best
When that foolish thing tore at my breast,
 You would grow so still,
 That your heart would thrill
 As you heard me tell of a demon's will,
When fate made me its jest!

And you would not scorn
My poor heart so torn,
But pluck from its side the bitter thorn,
 If you knew when I fell,
 How I thought even hell
 Would not lose me your love could I but tell
How my heart for you would mourn!

THE PENITENT

To Father Anjou at confession came
A peasant penitent and filled with shame.
"A tale I told of one who was my friend,
A scarlet scandal he could ne'er defend,
And I in sorrow would recall each word."
Then mused the Father when the tale he hear
"A penance fit for this man would I find
Who makes confession with a troubled mind."
Then to the penitent he said at last,
"Take thou a goose and hold it good and fast,
And to thy neighbor go in eager haste,
And at each step a feather pluck, nor waste
A moment's time, then straightway come to me
That pardon may be meted out to thee."
Then came the man and said, "Thus have I done."
The priest made answer, "Thou hast just begun.
Retrace thy steps and gather up again
Each feather and restore it, for 'tis then
Thou shalt have done for this the blameless goose
As for the man defamed when tongue so loose
Plucked every virtue from a friend's fair name,
And left him naked as this goose with shame.
For when each feather thou canst safe restore,
Thy friend's fair name awaits thee at my door."

THE THREE SONS

Hard was his heart. His will an iron thing.
Thus was Van Nord, an upright man and stern.
A farmer with three sons of sturdy mien.
Henry, the eldest and the favorite,
Unlike the rest, bore with his father's way.
And knowing that his father's will was law,
He argued not, but by agreement pleased,
And in all things deferred to him whose wish
And word were final in his father's house.
And duty made this eldest son obey;
For Henry sought to win his father's praise.

The second son a dreamer, William, went
About his tasks and lived in other worlds.
And yet he loved his father as a son,
But not like one who loves for duty's sake,
Nor yet because he was his father's son,
But more like one who wished his father might
Become the man he dreamed a father like.
For William's lofty spirit made ideal
All things; and oft his actions took a mood
In opposition quite to him who ruled.
Yet never meant he to set up his will
Against his father's as a test of strength,
But more because his heart knew what was right.

THE THREE SONS

For William looked beyond the farm's small life
And saw the wider vision of the world,
And compromise with justice meant more pain
Than any harsh rebuke his actions brought.

Now John was all affection, tossed between
The dictates of his heart and his weak will.
He bore no man a grudge, but quick forgave,
Though quite as swift his impulse led astray.
He loved his brothers, and to him all life
Was fair and beautiful to look upon.
To all gave he affection without stint,
And sought it in return as some dumb brute.
But when his father gave him stern command,
Oft irritated by John's wayward aims,
The tender boy would feel his blood congeal,
And where love strived, indifference found a place.
Then angry words and oft disputing ways
Brought him to shame and left him sorrowing.

Now Henry pleased his father in all things,
And took the wife his father chose for him.
But William loved a lass, and asked no man
For his approval of the choice, no more
Than he might seek permission for his prayers.
When he in gladness sought his father out
To tell him of his joy, he could not see
The rightness of a parent's course that bade
Him not to marry, and to tell her so.

THE THREE SONS

And as the days went by, father and son
Grew far apart; and William went his way,
And each one knew the other's love was dead.

Now fear had taken hold of John, and he
Went secretly to town to join his friends.
The tavern's warmth upon the wintry nights,
The good cheer in the cup, the friendly words
Were welcome things to him who needed that
Which was denied him in his father's house.
For these three sons for six long years had missed
A mother's care, and patient leading ways.
The little mound, that stretched its grassy length
Beneath the stars, held all the love that they
Had ever known. For she was sweet and mild,
And no harsh word was ever framed by her
Warm lips that often rested on her sons.
And John, the youngest and her babe, mourned her.
For harder grew his father day by day,
And seldom spake except in sharp rebuke
Of him whose eyes were reddened, and whose step
Grew more unsteady as he drained the cup.

One wild and wintry night through drifting snow
The heavy feet of John with stumbling gait
Turned towards his father's house as midnight tolled.
Unsteadily he made his way benumbed,
And when he reached the warm and sheltering room,
Fell headlong to the floor and lay asleep
Until the morning when his father came
And found his son in drunken stupor stretched.

THE THREE SONS

Then with an oath he banished him from home—
The prodigal his own harsh means had made—
And filled with shame for what his child had done,
Resolved to look not on his face again.

Now William grew and prospered in the law,
And as a learned judge upon the bench
Thought often of his father's judgments hard,
Unseasoned as they were by mercy's claim.
The sharpest picture that his mind retained
Was of a father's face so set and stern
That even in his sleep the fixed, deep frown
Wore not away by any kindly dream.
And William sighed, for most he thought of John
Whose tender ways had meant so much to both.
For life at home had set these two apart,
And oft they talked of her who was no more,
Whose kindly ministrations eased life's course.
And all the letters that John wrote spake most
Of her, not hinting at his own sad plight,
Till William wept, forgetting he was judge;
And when the letters ceased and no more news
Came from his childhood's home, his heart grew sick.

When men forget their offspring, or at last
Think of their flesh and blood and are not stirred,
Then do avenging spirits bring to pass
Strange punishments for this inhuman hate.
The mother-heart of Nature cannot look
Upon a child's neglected way unmoved.

THE THREE SONS

The fairest gift that heaven makes to earth
Comes fresh from God—a child torn from his heart.

Within the town where John had found abode
A woman lived, the harlot of the place,
And men who knew her, lightly spoke, and said,
"Her winning grace dwells in her bed-room eyes."
Still was she fair, and in her broken way
Kindly to him whose loneliness had found
Her home a shelter, and her love a thing
Still worthy of a wandering man's regard.
But drink was master in this house of lust;
And lower sank these twain till even she
Had lost the remnant of her love, and sent
Him forth from her to never more return.

The river ran a dark and lonely stream
Across the path of him who, shelterless
And cold, bethought him of his boyhood days,
When in the stream's soft, liquid arms he lay,
And felt its cool and comforting embrace.
At dusk that night they found his whitened face
Upturned beneath the water's silver edge.
The pale, cold star that silently looked down
Seemed lonelier for what it saw that night;
And when they bore him to his father's house
They heard a voice, "He is no son of mine!"
And saw the door close on this man's own child.

THE THREE SONS

Within a pauper's grave they laid away
The one who, motherless and fatherless, had died,
And found no love save in the friendly Earth
That let him lie untroubled on her breast.

Then blew a wet and wintry wind one day,
Fit omen for the deed to witnessed be,
Twixt Henry and his father who had grown
Still more impatient and commanding, too.
For ever since the night those solemn men
Their grewsome burden carried to his door,
His sullen mood became a daily thing,
And in a fit of temper spake Van Nord,
And raised his hand to strike his eldest son,
Who, lost to sense and shame by what he saw,
Quick dealt a blow that carried death with it.
That night behind the grating of a cell,
With no companions but remorse and fear,
He felt the iron will of law and groaned.
He could not understand wherein he erred,
Nor why his father's hand 'gainst him was raised
Who never crossed his will nor caused him pain.

Then came the second son of this strange man
To plead his brother's tragic cause. Resigning
From the bench he hurried home with troubled heart,
His young face crowned with sorrow's whitened hair.
The stillness of the court room caught one's breath.
In voice subdued he made his solemn plea,
And spake of home, and of his mother's care.

THE THREE SONS

Then with great skill he traced in bold relief
The story of three sons, and paused for strength.
For most of all he tenderly had dwelt
Upon the one who driven from his home
And with no place to lay his head, had found
The river's breast a welcome thing to him,
And laid him down to die and to forget
The thing he was, and more a father's hate.
And how in death that self-same door again
Was closed to him, who then could harm no man.
And as men sobbed, the father was disclosed
Who owed no man, and yet had never paid
The sacred debt of love he owed to all.
And how the prisoner served him faithfully
And gave his youth to him who taking all
Gave nothing in return but bed and board,
And killed the one thing that should never die—
The love that lies within the human breast
And feeds on love and understands not hate.
And stiller grew the court room as through tears,
He said, "Thus did my father kill two sons!"

Emotion gripped his throat as on he went,
"Think not that tyranny can win a child
To duty or to love's unselfish way.
My father sinned in that he never gave
By precept or example what was best.
'Tis less a deed for hempen-noose, to kill
The body than destroy a child's white soul.

THE THREE SONS

Think more in pity on this son than him
Whose sin 'gainst life a deeper scarlet is;
For soul, as well as blood, for vengeance cries.
A greater crime this father did commit
Than this his son robbed of a parent's love.
My brother was the fashioned instrument
A father's cruelty and hate had made.
As did the parent, blindly did the son,
And with no other thought than copy him
Who made his child obey e'en when 'twas wrong.
Mark how this boy's clean hand was raised to strike—
This son whose will had never been his own!
Cain slew in hate his brother in the field,
But this man went not forth to do this deed.
Most wantonly was taken from his life
The holy thing that will redeem all men,
And save them in the dreaded hour of trial!"

Then when the weary night had passed, Justice
In trembling voice her verdict gave, and one
Went forth again to bring back from the dead
The thing he lost.

RELEASE

The years had yielded their gray of dust,
And grief had gnawed with its iron rust.

The flesh was wrinkled with withering pain;
Its satin and velvet were bruise and blain.

The body had lost of its rectitude,
And was bowed by a world's solicitude.

The hands were crookt with the clutch of things;
The arms were weighted with the woes life brings.

The vision had vanished from the vacant eye,
And Age had kissed Youth's romance good-by.

The feet were fettered with fear and dread,
And only kept time with the march of the dead.

The mind lived over its childhood ways
With joy in the things of other days.

The heart was a shattered shrine that kept
Its broken trinkets where memory wept.

The smiles had changed into creases of care;
The face was a ruin beyond repair.

RELEASE

The organ tones of the voice were choked
With the sorrows that never could be revoked.

The delicate trumpets that heralded sound
With calamity's claims were cumbrously bound.

And the Soul, like a dove, was pecking its way
Out through the shell that was thinned by decay.

Hearing a voice only Soul understands;
Whispering the secrets of fairer lands.

That calm, white Soul, so chaste and so just,
With the lilt of a song, and a seraph's trust.

Waiting to mount like some quivering bird,
Listening intent for the home-calling word.

Seeking the sunlight whose burnished gold
And silver of promise new worlds unfold.

Lifting its wings on the spirit of prayer;
Resting on God in the Everywhere.

UNSCATHED

The Sunbeam stands on the stagnant pool
Unsoiled by the slime or the waters cool.

A shadow may lie on a Lily's head,
Yet never debauch its virtuous bed.

And sin may follow the faultless Soul
Leaving it perfect, and clean and whole.

If Love should be touched by the hand of Hate,
'Twould still hold supreme its exalted state.

The Great God can look on a man's vile way
Unmoved by the evil or grief's dismay.

For Sun, Soul, Lily and Love each would
Prove naught can destroy the divine or the good.

Dedicated to Judge James P. Niemann

REJOICE

When'er the hills speak unto me,
The voice of God stirs audibly.
The streams that journey garrulous,
His secret ways and plans discuss.
The rose that culls its lore from earth
Sings praises for each lowly birth.
The clouds that race across my sky,
Of blessings, ample, testify.
And star that darts its ray so clear
Acknowledges that God is near.
The tree that lifts its searching spire
Forbids my soul to hush desire.
The air that fills the space between,
Proclaims a spirit all unseen.
The dust I tread irreverently,
Resounds with immortality.
The perfume-laden breath of night
Betokens love beyond the sight.
The bird poised safely on the wing
Reveals a faith to which I cling.
And listening to each eager voice,
Exultingly all things rejoice.

Rejoice! Rejoice!
And hear the anthems in each voice!
The great, wide world is tuned in praise
Of all His works and wondrous ways!

LOVE'S GOLDEN GATE

Oh, it isn't wrongs that conquer,
And it isn't vice that wins,
When our human craft drops anchor
In the harbor of our sins.

And it isn't storms that wreck us,
Nor our fate that seems so ill,
But our foolish fears that check us
When the voice of God would still.

It is faith in right that masters.
It is justice that prevails.
It is truth that turns disasters
Into ships with silver sails.

And they sail and sail forever
Safely o'er the sea of fate,
When our pilot is the Savior
And our port Love's Golden Gate.

THE BLOSSOM'S SWEET WAY

'Twas a blossom rose-tinted
With the blush of the morn,
That of fruitage had hinted
When blossoms adorn.

And the wind softly courted
The bough where it blew,
Till with passion unthwarted
An apple burst through.

That was born in a wedlock
Of sun-gleam and air,
And was swayed in a hammock
Of emerald glare.

And it was not an ingrate,
For it wept with the rain,
And it danced with its playmate
The breeze from the lane.

And the sun was its sweetheart
That kissed it all day,
Till the moon, a proud up-start,
Would drive it away.

Yet the blossom so fragile
Loved the apple as well
As the sunbeam, more agile,
That snared with its spell.

THE BLOSSOM'S SWEET WAY

And though blossom and sunbeam
Were often compared,
Of which was its love-dream,
The apple despaired.

To the apple the blossom
Spake, "The love that is true
Will be locked in your bosom,
Too sacred for view."

Then enshrouded in perfume
The blossom lay dead,
Where their tryst was a volume
Of color outspread.

And the apple remembered
The blossom so frail,
And its image lay chambered
Like a lost Holy Grail.

And through days of long waiting
It treasured the bloom,
Till its own heart dilating
Was the blossom's fair tomb.

And the image thus cherished
Shaped the fruit's luscious way,
And though blossom had perished,
Yet its love stayed for aye.

THE BLOSSOM'S SWEET WAY

And the secret it carried
There was none ever knew,
For its heart had been married
To the blossom that blew.

Then a lover came bringing
His heart's idle way
To the tree where was clinging
The apple one day.

And cutting it open
To the innermost part,
He beheld the bright omen
Of the blossom's own heart.

What he saw on its bosom,
So clearly defined,
Was the form of the blossom
Its heart had enshrined.

And he wondered if ever
His own heart would show
A love that forever
Like the blossom's would grow.

For the love that is hidden
Away in the heart,
Lives on all unbidden,
And will never depart.

THE BLOSSOM'S SWEET WAY

And this is the story
From the blossom to glean,
It is love's perfect glory
To bless though unseen.

And should you cut through
An apple some day
You will bring into view
The blossom's sweet way.

THE PRIEST OF ST. PAUL'S

Father Sylvester, Priest of St. Paul's,
(Sweet be thy rest where the gentle rain falls)
Blest with the grace of Mary's own Son,
His be the plaudit of heaven's "Well done!"
Apostle of Truth and disciple of Love,
Friend of the lowly and the saints above,
How shall we fittingly tell of the man
Immortal of name in the long caravan
Of martyrs who willingly died for the race,
Content in the hour of death's embrace?

Angel recording the deeds of the just,
How will you write of his sanctified dust?
What will you place on the undying scroll?
What will you say of this hero's white soul?
Will your pen drip with tears, or blaze with a flame.
As you mention his deeds and his glorified name?
Too brief for remembrance, mortality's time,—
Let eternity praise him with unceasing chime!
The call of the dying! Who hears it but God?
The priest of St. Paul's walks where Death oft trod.
Into darkness more blighting than midnight he goes
With the light of the cross, and the chant of repose.
But he comes not again from the mouth of the pit
He so bravely descends, others' sins to remit.
Lay your garlands away. They are idle to him.

THE PRIEST OF ST. PAUL'S

He dwells with the saints whose halos were dim
Till the light of his face, and the sun of his soul
Reflected his glory and over them stole.
Let him rest with the dead that he died to redeem.
He is deaf to your praise and your empty esteem.
Yet I fancy the rain as it silently falls
Is God's tribute of praise to the priest of St. Paul's.

IN A CORNER OF HEAVEN

In a corner of heaven where children may stray,
A mother stood watching God's cherubs at play.
Their rapturous songs were filling the air
With an anthem of praise, and the essence of prayer.
Each note was the story of some weary life
Rid of its heart-ache, and sorrowing strife.
The chorus a happy and holy refrain
Of souls born in love through the travail of pain.
Till paradise echoed with happiness rare,
And heaven was glad in its freedom from care,
The scene was o'erspread with the calm of content
Wrought out of the woes a life-time had meant.
The mothers of men were spending their time
Listening to child-voices pealing a chime.

When, sudden, through gates that are jasper and gold,
'Cross seas that are crystal to streets very old,
The cry of a child came, and heaven grew still—
A place where the cry of the children can thrill.
Then a mother forgot all the joys of the place;
Her arms reached toward earth in a tender embrace,
Till an angel burst forth from God's heart that had heard,
And, swifter than thought and free as a bird,
Sped straight to the earth down a stairway of light
To the place where the child cried out in the night,
And lifting it, said, as it kissed off a tear,
"Be still little one, your mother can hear."

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

I

'Twas in the Second Period—
The days when Murder stalked,
And cruel deeds unpunished went,
And ghosts of dead men walked.

When innocence oft paid the price
Of Murder's scarlet need,
And Justice mocked at Liberty,
And took her bloody meed.

And so one day they found a man,
At Twilight's mystic hour,
Beside a woman's whitened corse—
Death's fruitage and Youth's flower.

The prie-dieu's ivory crucifix,
With pallor born of death,
Still shed the fragrance of her kiss
She gave with fervent breath.

Half-crazed at what his eyes beheld,
And dumb with sudden fright,
He stood transfixed before the grim
And gruesome mad'ning sight.

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

And thus they found him quite alone
With her dead body, when
The minions of the law appeared—
Those hard, unthinking men.

Their hurried questions dazed him till
He answered scarce a word;
And on his wrists he felt the chill
Of steel, but little heard.

The iron-weight of Law's hard hand,
The wristbands of cold steel—
And then a man forgotten is
By those who most should feel.

The wheedling net of circumstance
They wove about this youth.
An eye for eye was Judgment's cry!
Its plea, a tooth for tooth!

They flung him in a dungeon dark,
And twice the court convened,
And twice they sentenced him to death,
Yet no man intervened.

II

Life for a life has never paid
The debt of any crime;
Eternity is lengthened not
By years snatched out of Time!

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

The soothing sun is ne'er so sweet
As when the friendly sky
And God's good air come not again,
And hope prepares to die.

And all he ever said, he spake
In such a sullen mood,
They left him to a noose's fate,
And mocked to see him brood.

And all he saw those weary months
His maddened mind lay dumb,
Was visioned in that room of death
That turned his senses numb.

And most of all he saw her form
Outlined in Twilight's gloom.
And vividly his mind recalled
Each feature of the room—

The blood-red roses that had flashed
Love's message to this youth,
Whose mystic soul translated it
Into prophetic ruth;

The lines of lace-like arabesque
Tangling a yellow moon;
A woman dead by deed grotesque,
And slain by mad poltroon;

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

The Gothic bed with drapings red;
The spotless linen's sheen;
Embroidered crests to emphasize
Where beauty lay between;

The scarlet arras flecked with gold;
The panels carved with saints;
The pictures favored artist drew,
And glorified with paints;

Enamelled coffers hid between
The gold and royal blue;
The tapestries with romance wove
Where lover's lore ran through;

The window silver-streaked with sky;
The day's dead embers pale;
The haunting moon framed like a ghost.
By sombre mullions frail;

The jewels on her hands and throat;
The star-gems in her hair;
The silken shawl her shoulders grace
And naked arms ensnare;

Acanthus carved in bold relief
To deck an ancient urn
Upon a marble pedestal,
That incense rare might burn;

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

The relic from some argonaut
That brought its trophy home
To her that dreamland argosies
Might fancifully roam;

The silver goblets with the beams
A tardy sun let fall;
The shadows in the room's embrace
And then a lover's call;

That regal room wherein love dwelt,
Soft sentineled by stars,
That knew no bolt or barrier
Save what sweet love unbars.

III

What does it matter, gentlemen,
For one lone man to die,
If innocence unproven be
While lives the cruel lie?

The Law must take its human toll,
And Vengeance cares not whom.
For life is much the cheapest thing,
As Law doth oft assume.

The bitterness of biting hate
Was all they left to him,
Who saw the vision of his love
In light of dungeon dim.

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

Each meal he supped with glut of blood,
And hate for condiment,
Until he grew a stolid thing
With impulse impotent.

Sack-cloth and ashes knew he not,
But sky of brazen mould.
His mad mind dwelt on this one deed
That left him gray and old,

Until his hate was highest Alp
Within emotion's range;
His passion a Sahara's heat;
His mood, a madman's strange.

When men live in the shades of hell
With naught but empty hope
They hardened grow to misery,
And fear not hempen rope.

For wine of blood is not Soul's drink,
Nor flesh its daily bread.
It feasts not on some human thing,
Nor fattens on the dead.

IV

Now just before a man must die,
And wear a hangman's noose,
'Twas granted by an ancient law
That he might freely choose

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

One last desire of his heart.
So ran this ancient law.
That Justice be not made a jest,
They framed it without flaw.

And any wish was granted him
Save life or liberty,
Or poison, knife or drink to spoil
The fruit of gallows tree.

What humour in this ancient law
That held the strange decree
That one last wish might be fulfilled
As if in irony!

"This is my wish," the prisoner said,
As dipped a blood-red sun,
"That I be taken to the room
That crimson deed was done.

"Then search the city, and to me
Bring one beyond compare,
Unsoiled and blest with lover's love—
A woman wondrous fair."

Then led they him to that same room
His vision never lost
Through all the barren prison days,
And all the bitter cost.

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

And brought him one who knew men's souls—
A woman chaste and fair—
And left these twain alone with love
And hate to struggle there.

Would waxen throat by whitened hands
Be strangled into death?
Or failing flesh be set aflame
By passion's burning breath?

Or would redeeming angel be
The issue of that night
To link her soul with his in death
That it to God go white?

Or would it be eternal life
Henceforth his Soul should see—
A child born of creative love—
His immortality?

V

More purpled throat, more crumpled form,
A morning quite so dread,
Is never seen as when Life walks
In step with hangman's tread!

And Life and Love are ne'er so sweet
As when the friendly sky
Takes one last look at youth and hope
And sees a lover die!

THE BALLAD OF A CRIME

The jailer who kept silent watch,
Whom nothing may surprise,
Saw one go forth to meet the dawn
With laughter in his eyes.

COSMOS

One day my Soul bade me a long farewell
With griefless kiss, eyes where no tears would dwell.
My death-moist hand it dropped without lament,
And fixed its gaze where life's red sun outwent.
Then, on its way.

I watched its fadeless form go ages on;
Its noiseless footsteps tread new worlds upon.
I saw it climb with ease unmeasured heights,
And reach the place where God with Life unites,
And stop to pray.

And then I heard a language strange to me
That answered to my Soul on bended knee.
And from a gateway that a look unbars,
There poured a stream of deathless suns and stars
That caught my Soul.

Then silence reigned, and light filled time and space,
And changed the scene to Being without place,
And, like the days when Soul had been my sun,
Life recommenced as if all things were one,
And part were whole.

MY UNHAPPY FRIEND

I once met a man on a bright, sunny road,
With a shadow that followed wherever he strode.
The busiest man that I ever did see,
And quite unaware of the presence of me.
Munching and biting and chewing away,
He was savagely gnawing the whole live-long day
"What are you eating, my unhappy friend?"
I asked as the feasting was brought to an end.
"The thing that I ate was my shadow," said he.
"It grew such a nuisance, it quite harried me.
It followed me walking, and stood by my side,
It even went with me when taking a ride.
And it got in my way by running in front,
And grew to a monster from just a wee runt.
It bothered my feet, and it worried my head.
It even went with me one night to my bed.
It troubled me, somehow, a great deal today,
While trudging along on this sunny highway.
So I just ate it up, as you plainly can see,
And never again will the thing bother me!"

He scarcely had finished when out popped the moon
From under a cloud, and lo, very soon
The poor fellow's shadow was right at his heels,
Who appetite had not for any more meals!
He grew very angry as well as ashamed,
And said God was likely the one to be blamed.

MY UNHAPPY FRIEND

For while we were talking together that day
My shadow, he said, followed too, the same way!
"You'll have to get busy," I said, "very soon,
And eat up the sun and also the moon.
For these made the trouble," I sternly declared,
"And only a fool by a shadow is scared!"
Then he laughed at his weakness, and said "You are right.
I guess I was foolish to have such a fright.
I think I know, now, what's the matter with me
The shadow was all that I ever could see!"

COME BACK, OH DREAMS

Bring back to me, oh heart, I beg, .
The splendor of my dreams—
Those boyish fancies, now so vague,
With all their lucent gleams!

Come back, come back, oh happy hours,
And make me glad once more,
And bring with all thy magic powers
Enchantment as of yore!

Those cloud-ribbed galleys of the sky
With oarsmen—sun and wind—
That carried me to lands that lie
Beyond the farthest Ind.

The orbit of my world of fame;
The treasure-isles of wealth;
The lustre of some hero's name;
My boyish boast of health;

Those castles-in-the-air I reared
With all the trust of youth,
Whose every promise seemed endeared
By constancy and truth;

The islands of the sky at night
Whose harbor-lights were stars;
My fairy ship—the moon so bright—
With silver sails and spars;

COME BACK, OH DREAMS

The realms I peopled in my play
With kings and queens gem-crowned;
The fortified hills near Sunset Bay
That only fancy found;

The fairies, princes, goblins, elves
That were so real to me;
Once loved and feared so for themselves
In all sincerity;

Come back again, oh dreamlit shores
Romantic seas held fast—
My lost Atlantis, loved Azores—
Adventures of the past!

Valhalla with heroic lore;
Valkyrie and the Norns;
Will none of these my Youth restore,
For which my heart still mourns?

The giants that I longed to kill,
The ills and wrongs relieve,
Why is it deeds no longer thrill,
And wrongs no longer grieve?

Oh faith that gave me every joy,
And vanquished every foe,
Come back to me as when a boy
I could not let thee go!

COME BACK, OH DREAMS

Oh vision of my childhood's way!
How gladly would I sell
The joyless treasures of this day
Once more with thee to dwell!

Oh bitter loss of youth and trust,
Heart-hunger and remorse,
Must all I loved be turned to dust
Upon life's winding course?

Oh blissful dreams of golden hue
More brilliant than the sun,
Each one has faded out of view
As sands of time have run!

Once every thought fulfilled in part
The glory of a star
That shone within my happy heart
Where now no wonders are.

My play-time hours, my care-free way,
Are these forever done?
Is there no more a wistful day,
Nor yet a winsome sun?

Oh dreams divine, come back, come back,
And bless me as of yore;
Retrace, I pray, thy starlit track
To youth's long-vanished shore!

FAME

Unknown to the many, to the few I am Fame,
A much-reproached creature, called a fickle old dame.
I have opulence, power, genius and skill.
I do as I please without hindrance or will.
I cannot be wooed, cajoled or compelled.
By nobody's wish have I honor withheld.
Caprice is my pastime. Of chance I make sport.
Indifferent to riches, I live to transport.
I hunt a thatched roof, a hovel or hut.
I reach simple hearts whose doors are unshut.
I will not be guided by cravings of State.
I laugh at my nickname,—'a creature of fate.'

I search every garret and modest abode.
I know all the houses on Poverty Road.
I am fondest of mothers who cherish sweet dreams,
And whose visions of splendor are Angelus themes.
I wait for the coming of some little waif,
To whom my weird secrets I proudly vouchsafe.
I discern without error the Mothers of Men—
The ladies in waiting attending my reign.

I know what is needed to bless the world most.
I seek out the humble who pray and not boast.
I care not for palace or lordly estate.

FAME

I love best the garden with vine-covered gate,
Some leaky old garret, or manger, perchance,
That all of my gifts of glory enhance;
Some door, plain and lowly, the world overlooks,
That I, in my wisdom, have kept on my books.
My whimsical heart may see in some cot
The glory of God that man has forgot.
I trail behind poverty o'er upland and plain.
I follow the caravans of hunger and pain.
I peer into out-of-way places and lives,
And come in the hour that anguish survives.
I come unexpected, and this is my joy,
Surprising chaste maid, or mystical boy.
I hover for years, like a bright Advent Star,
Above the plain homes where the simple folk are.
And unknown though I be, their ways are so kind,
My heart is content with the welcome I find.
I whisper a secret to those I prefer,
And other world wonders on each I confer.
I jealously guard every child-heart I claim,
For its sponsor am I, its god-mother, Fame.
And no matter what fortune may seem to beset,
There is only one end to the plan I beget.
The world doffs its cap to the one I select,
For I bless with the gifts men ever respect.

The brush of the painter, the pen all aflame,
I lend to my charges to trace a great name.
I daze and amaze with the way I allot
The thing men call Soul, yet I choose none by lot.

FAME

I lock in a throat the heart of a song
In a little red house, an orator's tongue.
In hands soft and white a spirit I lay
To transfigure a canvas, or piece of dull clay.
The tapering fingers of artists I mould
That music and color may charm young and old.
I so touch a heart that it feels all the pain
Of a suffering world and contents it again.
I adorn not these lives with laces and gold,
Soul-tissue and ermine of thought each enfold.

I spend in a manner to the thoughtless seems waste,
Yet I never bestow in passion or haste.
I endow all my children, and bless with a grace
That envious mortals can never efface.
In love give I, only. My art like a kiss
Bestows a rare virtue, and adds a new bliss.
And yet am I hated by those who delight
In finding some fault in things wrong or right.
But the answer I make is the silence of sky
'The world idly views without questioning why.
And seldom men mark me a woman of taste
With preferment only for things that are chaste.
I come not with herald, nor trumpets' fanfare.
My tread is as noiseless as the spirit of air.
I disappoint many who crave for my power.
I know heaven's secrets, the needs of each hour.
Simplicity, Honesty, Virtue and Love,
Are the tokens my irony best may approve.

FAME

I give not to grown-ups, unless as a child
Each laughed at his troubles alarmingly piled.
Now listen my Children who seek a good name,
Be faithful to Duty if you would have Fame.

THE GAME

I was a woman. He was a man.
That is the way Love's story began.
It was rose-time in June. We met at a dance.
In the hot blood of youth and summer's pleasance.
We loved. Was it wrong? I leave you to guess
When I've done with the tale, and a few things confess.

'Twas a frolic of sexes. A game we all play.
Nay, be not so shocked. There are worse things today.
There is murder and hate, and the slaying of Truth,
And strangling the ambitions of brave, bright-eyed youth.
But we played our game fair, and fought it alone,
Save, perhaps, for the strength that is ever Love's own.

With each measured word would I tell the tale straight.
Why should I blush now? Shame is always too late.
Yet would I not dash from my cheek that red flame,
For oftimes a blush can preserve a good name.

To barter one's soul for a moment's brief thrill—
Ah, that is the joy we think Love must distill!
There's a love-story runs through all of life's way—
The passion, eternal, of creation at play.
The mating of birds, of blossoms, of men;
The wooing of sunshine and air in the glen;
The chalice of flower, and pollen of bee!

THE GAME

The wind on the water that courts the wild sea;
The moon a pale lover for earth every night,
And a maid for the heart of a man to delight.

Did our eyes do the wooing, or was it the Soul?
I cannot recall just the way that Love stole.
I only remember I loved him, and he,
Gave every fond proof that he really loved me.

We began with no tricks. It was honestly done.
The very best reason true hearts could be won.
Soft glances and melting of souls into bliss;
The perfume of breaths suggesting a kiss;
The satin of flesh 'gainst the strength of a face;
The ringleted hair in a silken embrace;
The pressure of hands and the wireless chime
Of a message that reached to the heart every time;
The meaningless words so entrancing of sound—
The dissembling with which every courtship is bound—
The lure of temptation; the rapture of risk;
The dangerous sweets with which lovers all frisk;
The betrayal of looks, and the actions whose speech
Is louder than words that remain to impeach;
The question that passion so mutely suggests;
The answer of virtue, no matter what tests;
The fever of bodies, with minds in debate;
The struggle with sin that souls arbitrate.

And the battle inspired by voluptuous sound
Of the music 'midst flowers where perfumes abound.

THE GAME

Do you wonder we suffered, and evermore thrilled,
And looked upon fear as a thing to be killed?
He seemed to disrobe me with passionate eyes,
And glance that coveted hidden surprise.
He trembled with ardor, or was it with awe?
My cheeks were aflame. His, pallid, I saw.

Speechless, emotion held each in a trance.
Its silent concession, a questioning glance.
The night air was cool, refreshing and calm.
The only intruder, an eaves-dropping palm.
The glow of the lights made a setting of gold.
The musical airs draped in sensuous fold.
'Twas a night serving well for the scene to be played
When a man must be saved, or a woman betrayed.

I am not to be praised for the thing that I did.
A maiden should always man's frailty forbid.
Through the swish and swirl of sensual things
Could be heard the eternal whisperings
Of Virtue and Love, till I felt at my side
The form of an angel white-robed as a bride.
The instinct, maternal, that shielded the man,
The God-in-the-woman revealing Love's plan,
A startled concern for the joys yet unborn,
The mothers of men who would rightfully scorn,
The dual protection that womanhood feels
For her own heart astray, and the lover who kneels—
These—and the sanctity of what was my gift—
Were the forces survived when our souls were adrift.

THE GAME

Yet he was a man, and his honor expands
As I look back tonight and my heart understands.
For the body's soul-value came rushing to him
When a moment's delight and a fanciful whim
Were gripping our hearts and blinding our eyes
Till the vision of Love brought its own glad surprise.
And thus were we saved. Shall I not share the praise
With the man who remembered that Love never slays?

NOW YOU'RE A MAN

Courage man! Try again.
No one scorns a hero's pain.
Up and at it! Do or die!
All the world will help you try.
Cheers are for the winner, boy.
Only fear can faith destroy.
Make a dash, and brave the thing.
Courage has a wholesome ring.
Keep the goal within your sight.
Never mind your present plight.
Whistle, or still better, sing.
Keep on smiling. Spurn the thing!
Someone's staked his all on you.
Don't desert him. Be true blue!
Never mind that truant tear,
Just so long as it's sincere.
Better men than you have shed
Tears, and still have gone ahead.
Let your spirit have a chance.
Fate is worth a second glance.
Strike your breast, and say, "I can!"
There, that's it! Now you're a man!

THE ANGEL OF THOUGHT

Once slipped a Thought from a soul-cradling sky,
Kissing its home-land and kinsmen good-bye.

Piercing the air in its arrowless flight;
Winging a message of heaven-spun light;

Eagerly waiting the welcome of earth;
Warbling the music of seraphs at birth;

Seeking a home like some migrating bird
Building a nest of emotion's warm word;

Hunting my heart as a fitting abode;
Longing for speech to interpret Love's code.

I who was songless until the thought came
Searching my heart with its luminous flame!

I who was barren, possessing all things,
Missing the music thought bears on its wings!

All of the blessings that earth treasures most
Grow out of thought gliding free as a ghost;

Gifts sent unbound as the air that we breathe,
Richer with life than the currents that seethe;

THE ANGEL OF THOUGHT

Wrought into things by the homage of will;
Stirring to deeds with delirious thrill.

Bringing to life someone's soul yet unborn,
Bursting a grave with the freshness of morn;

Singing its hope into hearts that are sad,
Spreading the music that makes the world glad.

God's tender message, to help on the way;
Wafted to Him when we worthily pray.

Never a thought sent for earth to receive,
But was made ready for men to believe.

All that we give through interpreted thought
Melts into blessedness, miracle-wrought.

Truth is the orb of Eternity's day;
Thought is the sunbeam it drops on our way.

Let me breathe deeper God's spirit of air—
Health-giving tonic of thoughts fit for prayer.

White-winged and holy and chastened of fear,
Each with a message the Soul waits to hear.

Thoughts born of beauty, adorned in the sky—
God's eager angels that faultlessly fly.

THY SOUL AND MINE

Thy Soul and mine whose glances meet,
How well they understand!
For they were wed eons ago
In Love's own Sprit Land!

Held captive by Fate's cords of clay,
And forced to dwell apart,
How often have they met within
The regions of the heart!

Oh Soul of thine, and Soul of mine
Compelled to bide Life's bands,
We link our thought in tearful truce,
And clasp our spirit hands!

Some day, somewhere these iron chains,
That mock our marriage vows,
Will severed be by one swift glance
Immortal Love allows!

Then shall we meet in Joy's embrace,
And kiss away earth's fate,
And keep the long, lost way of Love
That leads to Soul's estate.

THE SONG OF THE SEA

There is a truth that surges free,
Billowing like a breaking sea.

There is a message spirits hear,
Murmuring o'er a sunstrewn mere.

"Wind and Sun and whispering Sea,
What is the secret you sing to me?"

"I am Eternity's tearless voice—
Billowing ocean of souls who rejoice."

Ebbing and flooding it came and went,
Holding its converse eloquent.

Dashing, its tuneful silver tongue
Burst into notes of noble song.

Tumulting strains from distant shore,
Pealing its echoes of golden lore.

Haunting, it sang immortal lay;
Hearing, I threw discord away.

Happy, I tossed a kiss to the sea;
The spray returned its kisses to me.

THE SONG OF THE SEA

Sunbeams lay sparkling everywhere.
Something divine was in the air.

Something I never felt before,
Making my heart an echoing shore.

"What is it? What is it? Answer me,
Wind and Sun and bantering Sea!"

"It is Life. It is Love; nothing more.
Thy soul is the sea, and thy heart its shore."

WHEN THE PLAY IS DONE

Grant us one moment more,
We implore.
Hold back the severing curtain.
Praise is too oft uncertain.
Your ringing applause
The heart overawes,
And sweet is emotion's burden

Now that the play is done,
And all the honors won,
Here let us bask in your happiness too.
Haste not our final bow;
This is our moment now—
One little moment—let us spend it with you.

Stifle the prompter's bell
Lest its wayward tongue tell
Some secret, swift straying,
That slipped in the playing
From the mimicking throat
Choked with lines conned by rote
When our fear of you set us all praying.

The players have taken from you
Each sweet-sounding, soul-moving cue,
And ever thereafter
Awaited your laughter

WHEN THE PLAY IS DONE

Eagerly, gladly,
Hungriily, madly,
From green-room and wing to each rafter!

This, then, is the reason we pause:
Your applause
Is stirring the soul.
And this your own rôle
You have played tonight
Was more helpfully right
Than our lines that were meant to be droll.

We danced and we played;
We sang unafraid
When you sent us that message on wings
That turned empty art
Into something of heart
That evermore revels and sings.

Out of Life's tragedy
Wrought we our comedy,
Fashioning our tears into laughter and wit.
Making our sorrow
Your bright tomorrow,
Wherever we found you—in gallery or pit.

We have played for you, wept for you,
Worked for you, kept for you
Our best that was given to each.
We have suffered so loyally,
And paid it so royally
For praise—your most eloquent speech.

WHEN THE PLAY IS DONE

And all that we are
From call-boy to star,
We owe to the coin that you paid;
More enduring than gold,
That never grows old,
When talents turn feeble and fade.

Fate has been hoarding
For us its applauding,
And you were so eager to share in her praise.
Kisses we throw to you
For all that we owe to you.
God! how we'll love you through all of our days!

When footlights are out,
And ghosts flit about,
And the playhouse is empty and drear,
The spirits that wake
Will love for your sake,
And come back to bless and to cheer.

Through all of the shifting
Of scenes Life is lifting,
May the Temple of Art be our shrine.
May we kneel at its altar,
And nevermore falter,
Since the message we bring is divine!

THE ACOLYTE AND THE POPE

Pope Gregory gazed at the sky and smiled.
His face wore the calm of a little child.

The same sky bent o'er a cottage white,
And hallowed the face of an acolyte.

A face that was sweet and holy, too,
That an inner light was shining through.

An angel stood waiting to bear away
The spirit released where the young child lay.

Brought low by a fever the lad lay ill,
And the house, like the night, grew grey and still.

Then the night like a mantle settled down,
And wrapped in its folds the Pope's home town.

Like the vestments he wore it seemed to drape
The town where he lived when his youth took shape.

A mother in tears watched the child of her heart—
Too sacred a gift from her soul to part.

'Twas the child of one, whose breast had thrilled
When she gave to the world her dream fulfilled.

THE ACOLYTE AND THE POPE

She had kept him for God in her inner soul,
And the Pope's great throne was her dream's bright goal.

She had dreamed, and her dream was to her divine
That she kept in her heart's most sacred shrine.

But now all her dreams seemed idle things
In the sorrowful sound of an angel's wings.

The fruit of her body would she give to Rome,
But unwillingly her child to adorn God's home.

She had seen him serve as an acolyte
At the altar of God 'midst the candles bright.

And her wild heart pictured the holy scene
'Neath the dome of St. Peter's where saints convene.

But the priest of the parish blessed that night
The child with the church's last sad rite.

"Peace," said the Father, "God grant thee rest."
And he reverently crossed his holy breast.

With the cords of silver in death's disarray,
And the golden bowl broken, the soul slipped away.

The essence of life floated out on the air
While the candle-light flickered a golden-hued prayer.

THE ACOLYTE AND THE POPE

Now the Holy Father, who slept in Rome,
Felt his spirit wander to his childhood's home.

For often the soul in our sleep takes wings,
And wanders afar, seeking worldless things.

From the earth in its flight it silently goes,
And journeys to spheres the soul alone knows.

Returning again at the break of day
With the chant of the mass the angels say.

But if never more to the earth it returns,
At the heavenly mass as a spirit it burns.

Then the altar-boy came to the Land of Light
With spirit pure and with radiance bright.

And a requiem mass for his soul was sung
In the Pope's home town in the Latin tongue.

But a choir seraphic chanted the lays
That only were sung in a potentate's praise.

The music sprang forth from the organ's throat
In a burst of song and triumphant note

That floated away on the peaceful air
Like a holy psalm and a seraph's prayer.

THE ACOLYTE AND THE POPE

The incense arose like a cloud of smoke,
And of sins forgiven symbolic spoke.

And a new wine poured at the sacrament—
The sacred blood that for souls was spent.

To the Pope there seemed in the mystic bread
The hallowed meaning of souls to be fed.

Pope Gregory knelt at the altar of God
Where angelic hosts in reverence trod;

And lifted the cross to his lips devout
As the acolyte's praise moved heaven throughout.

On the throne of the Pope sat a little child
With the air of a king and a spirit mild.

And the words of the mass to the Pope seemed new—
A joy to the soul with penitence true.

The pallor of death touched the face of the Pope,
But his spirit breathed of immortal hope.

Then the acolyte walked 'midst the symbols fair
With his body transfigured and with shining hair.

Towards the Pope, himself, not a look was turned.
Each gaze was transfixed on the lights that burned.

THE ACOLYTE AND THE POPE

For the acolyte held in his waxen hand
A taper of gold like a magic wand.

A presence supernal he moved devout,
And lighted each candle that stood about.

In the taper's blaze a spirit shone
Whose rays streamed out to the Pontiff's throne.

And the air was charged with a sanctity
That blended dull Time with Eternity.

And a voice was heard in the service then
That once on the earth had been heard by men.

With the strains of the music it melted soft,
From pallid crucifix to choir loft.

And the kneeling throng in emotion's trance
Heard a voice divine in its utterance:

"In my kingdom the greatest is he who deems
No task too humble for my altar beams.

"He who lights for the world the smallest flame,
Sets aglow the lamp of my Holy Name,

"That shines undimmed, and for each is blest
Who makes my humility manifest.

THE ACOLYTE AND THE POPE

"For the sins of the world are pride and hate
That heaven, alone, can eradicate.

"He rules supreme in the Pontiff's sphere
Who banishes pride and makes hate disappear."

A blessing on each seemed the voice to bestow,
As in cadence sweet it said soft and low:

"My kingdom is found in the heart of a child."
Then the face of the Christ on Gregory smiled,

Whose soul made tender by memories bright
Recalled how he served as an acolyte

In those days of yore, as a simple lad,
At the humble service that made men glad.

Then the Pope awoke, and beheld the morn
Like an altar's light all the earth adorn;

And a beam of gold touched St. Peter's dome,
While a peace serene wrapped his childhood's home.

CHARITY

A beggar came seeking for alms of me.
I tossed him a coin that the world might see.

A woman came starving and half-way dead.
I hurriedly gave her a loaf of bread.

To a merchant disabled by stress of times,
I proffered my gold, and his thanks were chimes.

To a prisoner languishing long in jail,
Freedom I brought through unfettering bail.

To a soul in sorrow I gave glad cheer,
And I took my pay in an unwept tear.

Then the years laughed by, and I, too, had needs.
The beggar was rich, but, alas, not in deeds.

The woman forgot when her hunger was keen;
Her gratitude long had grown grey and lean.

The merchant waxed great, but had nothing to spare
When he learned that my coffers were empty and bare.

And the man who went free, for pity gave scorn,
Yet these were my friends who once made me mourn.

CHARITY

**But the man who had sorrow, now sorrowed for me;
Though poor, yet his gift was a heart's sympathy.**

**What we give of the soul will return to us when
We really have need of the service of men.**

**But material gifts will be curses we toss,
Returning to vex in the day of our loss.**

**Alas, when we measure the sins of the race,
To the worship of gold, each one can we trace.**

I HAD A FRIEND

What words can thrill as these, "I had a friend,"
Yet seem too sweetly sad to comprehend?

My heart that holds a friend in hallowed trust
Immortalizes every atom of his dust.

Upon his noble qualities I dwell,
And with fond eloquence each virtue tell.

I look so long upon his graces rare
That each becomes my own as wondrous fair.

I so adorn his grave within my heart
That sympathy sees sorrow's grief depart.

And out of life's dead dust grows charity;
The flowers of friendship bloom eternally.

The tears I pour are, by love's alchemy,
Changed into crystallized gems of memory.

So long I stay beside his sacred shrine,
His gracious gifts become to me divine.

Through grief I learn to silence each complaint,
And think of him as some ascended saint.

I HAD A FRIEND

The sweet, sad recollection of a friend
Makes every simple virtue to transcend.

And every grave where fairest flower blows
Holds some deep meaning only friendship knows.

For virtue is not ours until by loss
We wear a crown of thorns and bear a cross,

And, some day, looking into life's sad face,
A friend's departed goodness learn to trace.

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

I walked across the courtyard of Eternity one day,
Where the paving-stones of passion lined the long imperial
way,
To the palace where the pictures hung within the gallery wing
That contained the royal paintings and the etchings of a
King.
Where each canvas was a memory, that portrayed with
rarest art
The glories of a monarch, and the fancies of his heart.
Twilight's curtains draped the windows of the far-receding
west,
And the spices of the south the truant air seemed to invest.
And the ringlets in the shadows of the coiffure of the night
Lay upon the face of fancy to adorn the pretty sight.
The gypsy-blood of summer filled me with a mad despair,
As the vagabonding clouds tramped over sky and through
the air.

The glories of the day and night, and scenes of common life
Were sketched upon the palace walls in paintings rich and
rife.
There was summer, spring and winter and the autumn's
squandered gold,
There was life and death depicted—tragic tales of young
and old—

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

With events of history embleméd, and a touch of worldless things,

Till I marveled at the wisdom, and the art that was the King's.

Lacking nothing, all the beauty so profusely spread about
Made me grateful to be living, made my visit seem devout.
And I tried to catch the meaning in the pictures' lofty lore
That the royal secrets hidden might be mine to long adore.
Then with reverent tread I journeyed through the gallery's
wide space,

Gazing at the marvels many that a royal hand could trace.

But the King I saw not toiling, just his handiwork alone
That lay spread in beauteous bounty o'er the earth that was
his throne.

And emotion deep and subtle stirred me as I viewed his art,
Till the pattering tears fell softly on the roof of my lone
heart.

The paintings carried lessons full of wisdom in each one
That a royal mind conceived and only kindly thought could
own.

October's gold he rifled from the treasure-house of June
And the hush of heat like incense 'rose from out a burning noon.
Piercing peaks were outlined giants, slumbering, bosomed by
the sky,

And the autumn browned and tanned by summer's sun went
gayly by.

A wreathing mist for bridal veil, and then the folding fog—
A shroud of death enveloping—a fitting epilogue.

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

The scribe of frost had penciled his white screed on every-
thing—

The hieroglyphics winter writes—translated by the spring.

A ship of death was sailing in the offing of life's sea—

Sailing towards the Isles of Night and cargoed for Eternity.

A thousand frozen stars shot through the glimmering roof
of night,

And the self-hood of the planets filled my soul with courage
bright.

Then the magnitude of might in the oblivion of space

Held me spellbound till new wonders drew me to their happy
place.

A dappled dress I noticed on the darlings of the dirt,

Where the miscreant weeds were scattered without thought
of any hurt—

Those lowly, common people of the dark, forbidding soil,
To enhance the burning beauty of the bloom that knew no toil.

A forest fane was peopled with an animated host,

And a choir of birds sang anthems with a justifying boast.

The burgeoning of blossoms gave the air a holy scent;

In a conclave of green trees the leaves were gossiping content.

Then the storm's fierce frown I noticed, and earth's fur-
rowed brow of fear,

And night that pitched its tents of gloom upon a scene
austere,

Till the dawn with silver sandals sparkling with their pearls
of dew

Noiseless came upon the scene, and brought another day to
view,

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

Summer's golden tresses braided by her handmaiden the sun
Scented with the May-bloom's attar, crowned with laurels
spring had won.

Sportive naiads animated other scenes with their delight,
Till the rivers, lakes and fountains were transporting spirits
bright.

Birds of plumage hovered blithely, singing carols lyrical
Till all nature seemed transfigured by a wondrous miracle.
The wine-red glow of summer, and the gold-embroidered
air

Draped all mortal things with beauty, placed a halo every-
where.

And I heard the sea's great sob, and felt its mist of falling
tears

That a universe had treasured through the long unnumbered
years.

Saw the fortitude of mien that robed the solemn rock-bound
coasts,

And the stately palms sea-mirrored—tall emaciated ghosts.
Saw dissolving shades of twilight put the silences of night
Upon scenes the day made garrulous, now hushed as if from
fright.

Then I saw the seal of winter with its silver clasp of frost,
And a snow-white shroud of mercy wrap the world's swift-
dying host,
Till the lips of earth were muted by the rigor of a clime
Whose arrowed edicts pierced life with a prescience all
sublime.

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

And the sea grew colder, colder, and the air a shriveled thing,
And the night a span unending, and the moon a snow-storm's
ring,

While the flaying winds in fury lashed and flailed and lashed
again

Till the stars with set-eyes, staring, looked their pity upon
men.

In a sheltered corner, lazing, glowed a canvas warm and
bright

That engaged my fancy quickly in relief of winter's night.
'Twas an Inn with windows hallowed by the fiery red of
cheer

Into whose retreat and shelter eagerly I longed to peer.

But imagination, only, had I for the joys within,

I could wait and wonder, merely, on the outside of the Inn.

But my heart found rest and comfort in the contemplated
hope

Of the day when travels over, I my way to it might grope,
Through the snows of life's long winter to the shelter of the
place

All prepared with cheery welcome for the traveler to embrace,

When the arrant coward Death, would, trembling at the
sight of Life,

Slink away ashamed, forever, of his futile, famished strife.

Then in glad release the humour of the King went roaming
wild,

For the pictures harbored fancies of some wonder-loving
child.

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

Here was Æschylus, and Homer, and dark Dante, too,
forsooth,
Shakespeare, Marlowe and Ben Jonson—poet-lovers of my
youth—

And the gods men had created born of eager, anxious art
For the semblance of the joys enshrined in heaven's human
heart.

Sweet Venus and Apollo and the stern imperial Jove,
Diana and Minerva and the myriad host we love.
And the flute of Pan to pipe an amorous, pastoral rune
That all the ages echo in an unforgotten tune.

And Sophocles and Sappho each with wondrous stories
wreathed,

Till the poet's air, immortal, was the spirit that I breathed.
Then o'er fields Elysian went I with the singers, heaven-born,
Reaping visions all transporting, lyric harvest, epic corn.
Then the lure of mystic meaning gripped me with a strange
delight

As I stood, transfigured, gazing at a world-dream's stirring
sight.

Suddenly a herald's blast, and then the sound of music faint,
And I knew the King had entered, but my soul felt no
restraint.

"Choose the painting you may fancy," said the King in tender
voice.

Then my heart aleap with gladness made my eager soul
rejoice.

"I have chosen," said I quickly, my impulsive mind intent
On the object of my passion that my gaze held reverent.

THE ETCHINGS OF A KING

In an obscure corner, resting, where curators often toss
Things unworthy, was the marvel—an illuminated cross—
Set against a midnight darkness with relief of bars of gold,
Where there came and went an image only searching eyes
 behold.

Sometimes sorrow, yet more often, there appeared upon the
 face

A supernal gleam of glory, and a joy my soul could trace.
Then I saw the King in rapture take the symbol from the
 wall,

And replace it on my bosom with a grace I felt enthrall,
And against my heart he pressed it, till I felt its burdened
 pain,

Then with voice prophetic whispered, "It will every grief
 sustain."

OH LIFE 'TIS WELL

Oh Life 'tis well thy face is veiled,
So beautiful thou art!
Before thy wonders have I paled,
And felt my pulses start
Thy luring secrets so amaze,
We dwell as strangers quite;
Yet fascinated do I gaze,
And view thee with delight!

And all so beautiful thou art
With sage solemnity,
I find it not within my heart
To bear thy scrutiny.
If I might curb each doubting mood,
And know thou lovest me,
In every evil find some good,
How happy would I be!

But I must bide the weary hours
Of mine anxiety
To learn the secret of thy powers
That shape my destiny.
I am but dust encasing soul;
Of Life an atom's part;
Thou art the great and perfect whole;
The keeper of God's heart!

OH LIFE 'TIS WELL

Some day, somewhere beyond the ken
Of mortal minds defied,
Thou shalt reveal the need of men,
And leave me satisfied.
Then shall I see thee face to face,
And know no mystery,
But rest with thee in some fair place
Of sweet tranquillity!

REMORSE

My gladness forever is ended.
My beautiful Soul sits apart.
I foolishly fought and offended,
And crimsonly stained is my heart.

Why, why did I trade my blest birthright
For sorrow and endless regret?
Why gave I sweet day for Soul's midnight?
For griefs that I cannot forget?

Why is it that eyes seeing see not?
That what we possess seems so vain?
That knowledge is ever a bigot,
And learning but wisdom's proud pain?

Why gave I my child-heart for yearning?
Simplicity, why was it lost?
Ah! why should experience be spurning
The gift that improvidence cost?

Yet out of the depths would I struggle,
Entreating my Soul to return;
Ashamed of ambition's mad juggle
That made my pale conscience to burn.

REMORSE

Oh Soul that I lost in my erring—
My Savior, and Hero, and Friend—
Bring back once again the conferring
Of joys that I would not have end.

KATE

I see her as in other days—
My Kate, my gentle Kate—
She won me with her patient ways,
And speech affectionate.
Life's shadows melted at her glance;
The harsh words went unsaid.
Her lyric voice woke Love's romance.
Long has its song been dead.

I saw her first beneath the vines
That drooped about her face.
To me the dearest of earth's shrines,
That little garden space.
The roses leaned against her cheek;
The lilies kissed her hand;
The morning-glories tried to speak,
And make her understand.

For all prophetic the bloom,
That pensively entwined,
Depicted some impending doom
Her spirit world divined.
For flowers have a soulful way
Of making some hearts sad,
So eloquently they portray
The coming days less glad.

KATE

The pansies bowed each plaintive head
As if in silent prayer;
The violets heard an angel's tread
Upon a perfumed stair.
A soft white cloud with shadows passed
That on the garden knelt,
And seemed to solemnly forecast
What every blossom felt.

The flowers with their tears of dew
Drooped heavy with the weight
Of prophecy the night passed through
Unstayed by garden gate.
Why must the sweetest joys we know
Come to an end so soon?
Why is it pleasures here below
Are all too brief a boon?

To me one spot is hallowed far
Beyond all mortal scenes.
There is no morn nor evening star,
Whose wonder intervenes,
That thrills me as that sacred place
Where long years gone we met,
And I beheld her pretty face
That Time cannot forget.

Oh Kate, my Kate, I feel the charm
Of dulcet voice and word
That banished lover's first alarm,
And bashfulness absurd.

KATE

What priceless wealth would I have paid
To touch the straying strands
Of ringlets that could masquerade
As safe from tempter's hands!

Oh Kate, my Kate, though years are gone,
The vision will not fade;
For oft I sit and dream alone
Of thee my spirit maid.
To me the dream, now incomplete,
Holds nothing so divine
As one bright image all replete
With graces that were thine.

I live once more those happy days,
When to a new made home,
I brought thee with a lover's praise
Where thou wert glad to come.
Our simple cot a palace was,
And I thy slave at hand.
Thou wert its queen magnanimous
To graciously command.

But sweetest was that mystic morn
When, 'gainst thy bosom fair,
A cherub's face lay to adorn,
And nestle trusting there.
My heart's Madonna wert thou then—
Oh God, hold back the tears!—
Why is it that the strongest men
Dread most the vanished years?

KATE

I wonder why the songs we sing
Bring back a long-lost face?
Why broken chords forever cling
About a treasured place?
Oh Kate, my Kate, God keep thee safe
Within His heart's own fold
Until I bring the little waif
Whose lonely hand I hold!

My own sad soul with hidden woe
That looks on anguish deep,
Translates the sorrows others know,
The tears that others weep.
Alas for pity that must pay
The price of its own pain
In heartaches through some mournful day
When Love lies cold and slain!

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN

A woman came to a heart's shut door,
She came not rich, but exceeding poor.
She had sacrificed of her treasures rare
For the man she thought would some day care,
But his love had long grown cold.

She sought not to enter his untouched heart,
For she wore a wound with an endless smart.
But she seemed made whole by an inner light
That shone through her famished soul so white,
Though her body, it was old.

Her voice was mellowed by the passing years.
It was emptied, quite, of the useless tears.
And her mouth still sweet was firm and just.
And her arrowed words shot free from lust;
For she was a woman now.

She had made life o'er by the fearless truth
Of a foolish love, and a wasted youth.
She had paid her price—though it left her spent
Of the sweetest grace that her soul had lent—
The price of a faithless vow.

And the man asked naught, for he understood.
He was silenced, quite, by her widowhood

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN

That had laid away in a heart's deep grave,
The precious thing that could slay or save.

And he pondered sad and long.

Then she spake to him of those other days—
Of the golden hours and love's pretty ways,
And recalled to mind what she said to him,
When the sun was high, and fate's shadows dim.

And he heard how love was wrong.

"To the lowest Hell I would go with you,
Content to stay though the world withdrew,
And bolt and bar every passage way,
If only Love would remain alway."

And still other words she spake.

"Thus would a woman do, sealing her fate.
But a man would stop when he reached the gate.
For a man seldom learns that the Love that saves
Is a thing so holy it never enslaves."

And he knew why hearts could break.

"A man should lift to the highest heaven
A woman's love that so free is given;
For the Love that takes and forgets to give,
Is withered by Lust that never can live,
For the theft of Love is sin."

And the woman's eyes and those of the man,
Were touched by the tale as memory ran.
And his heart's shut door opened wide to gain
The one he slew with such careless pain—
But the woman went not in.

THE WAY TO A KING

I came to a palace walled and barred,
Where a sentry, stolid, stood on guard.

A message I bear for my Lord, the King.
"This gate," said the guard," will only swing

"When a key shall turn in its brazen lock
That will give to the gate a mortal shock."

So I laid my hand on the bolted door,
And it opened wide on the courtyard floor.

When a second gate within I saw,
That a sentinel kept who said with awe,

"Who enters this portal must be so wise
That bolts unbar at the bend of eyes."

So long did I gaze on the polished brass
That the sentry gave me leave to pass.

O'er the courtyard's royal course I went
To the marble steps and steep ascent,

Where a third gate barred the traveler's way,
And the soldier guarding stopped to say,

THE WAY TO A KING

"This is the gate His Majesty the King
Permits none to enter who gifts never bring."

My heart beat against the forbidding gate,
Till the throbbing was felt by its iron weight

That yielded, and then in the palace I stood,
Where the King gave me welcome as only King could.

"Three gates have I passed and three locks did I move
To reach thee, oh King, and my loyalty prove.

"Of jasper and gold and of pearl are thy gates,
But Truth, Joy and Love are the keys each awaits."

"Yet these are the doors," the King made reply,
Life locks with a Doubt, a Tear and a Lie!"

LOVE PASSED BY MY WINDOW-PANE

Love passed by my window-pane,
Playing his old trick—
Teasing me with mock disdain—
Making my heart sick.

All too late Love passed again,
Sorry for his trick,
Someone else was mocking then,
Making him love-sick.

Now a shade is drawn so tight
'Cross my window-pane,
Life shuts out with all his might
Love's old tricks so vain.

THE ONLY HEAVEN

I beheld a Spirit joyous
Shaping Life most manifold—
Birds and blossoms, men full conscious,
Strands of silver and of gold.

Brown-eyed cattle, streams that shimmer,
Lacing ferns, and pulsing air,
Purple hills, and stars that glimmer,
Scenes of glory wondrous fair.

And it bade me make a heaven
Filled with spirits born of Love.
And through streams of sunshine riven,
Gather blessings from above.

And I caught its eager passion
For creating joys sublime,
And my soul began to fashion
Dreams of Love from scenes of Time.

Then I noted longings many,
Each one nestling in a heart,
But I searched, and found not any
Quite content with human art.

THE ONLY HEAVEN

Then a lonely soul came pleading
In my paradise to share,
And its eager suppliance heeding
Brought me sunshine everywhere.

Golden shafts that reached to glory,
Where mistakes are all undone;
And I traced the solemn story
That God's heaven and mine were one.

And through silver chimes came stealing
From the choirs of God above,
Angel voices all revealing
That the only heaven is Love.

THE UNSEEN

These are my windows, these, washed clean.

Seeing, still see I naught.

All would I yield of what I have seen,

Could Life's secret be caught.

Washed are my windows. Cleansed with tears.

God, in what pain I wrought!

Seeking one glimpse, through a night of years,

Of Thy eternal thought!

Closed are my windows, when I see,

Not what a life-time brought,

But what wise Death reveals to me,

Seeing I saw untaught.

THE JESTER

He pleases with his quip and jest,
And tells a tale the merriest.
But underneath his mask of wit
He hides the tragic part of it.
He brings a laugh through breaking heart
That pleases with its perfect art.
The lines he speaks so merrily
Bring naught to mind but drollery.

At home with her, bereft of weal,
He lives the part his lines conceal.
The play has changed from mirth and glee
To one of laughless lunacy,
He cons his lines between the shrieks
Of her who never sanely speaks.
His finest bit of acting where
No one applauds, no one may care!

He plays the scene mad reason sets,
And takes the cue Love ne'er forgets.
But while he weeps he picks the laugh
His part hides in each paragraph.
Between the strokings of her hands
He shapes the grimace jest demands,
And mocks at Life as Life mocked him,
With mask of wit and humour grim!

THE ANGEL AND THE BOY

"Get thee gone," roared father Blake,
"With thy rod, and to the lake.

"Bring us fish. We sup tonight.
But not thou if catch be light!"

Golden sun seemed sullen gray;
Fishing, labor's toilsome way;

Journey but a stony road;
Fishing-rod a stinging goad.

"Work, only work know I!"
Sighed the lad and wandered by.

Wandered out in life's dull way
In paths of pain instead of play.

Gaze bent downward on the road,
Weary of toil's troublous load,

Anxious over many things,
He his empty basket swings,

When across his path there streams
A flash of light that, dancing, gleams;

THE ANGEL AND THE BOY

Merriment in every glint.
Not of pain a single hint.

Warmth and friendship, smile and play,
Bidding him the time of day.

Then a shape it quickly took,
With a grace and radiant look.

"Who art thou?" the lad exclaimed.
"It matters not how I be named.

"What I am is more to me,
And more I trust it be to thee."

With a frown where harsh thoughts lurk,
Cried the lad, "My name is Work!"

"Work? Ah, yes, I know thee well.
In thy house all pleasures dwell."

"Not in mine," the lad replied,
"Drudgery my days provide."

"Look at me," the angel said,
While a halo wreathed his head;

And in pity, gazing down,
He left a smile and took the frown.

THE ANGEL AND THE BOY

Took the frown, and smoothed the face
Into satin's softest grace.

Buoyancy and hope remained,
Where, before, a heart complained.

Visions came as quick as thought;
Dreams that into deeds were wrought.

And the lad with winsome glance,
Saw the angel's countenance.

"Friend of mine, whoe'er thou art
Show me all thy happy heart."

And he caught the angel's sleeve,
Held it fast, and would not leave.

Then the angel beaming love,
Pointing wistfully above,

Drew the lad's attention where
Only sunshine filled the air.

Suddenly a vision glowed
All about them in the road.

"Dreams are never idle things
When they lift us as on wings.

THE ANGEL AND THE BOY

"Let the angel in thee rise.
Lad, behold him with thine eyes."

Then himself he saw, and smiled,
And the angel was a child.

"We are brethren." "Nay, too fast.
By some trial must friendship last."

"Let me but an angel be
One brief day, and serve as thee"

"Then thyself must I be, too,
Spake the Angel, "to be true."

Quickly changing clothes they stood
Eager for this brotherhood.

Then their separate ways they went,
Each upon his duties bent.

In the house where lived the lad
Came the angel oddly clad.

"Idler," said the father's ire,
"Dreaming is thy one desire!

"Sent I thee not out to fish?
Thou shalt sup from empty dish!"

THE ANGEL AND THE BOY

Spake the angel ne'er a word,
Uncomplainingly he heard.

Then as if by wizard's charm
On the table by his arm

Lay in bounty fish and fowl,
But for thanks an angry scowl,

And the father's cursing mood,
"Trickster, thou, in my own brood!

"How came this so quick to pass?"
Then the angel spake, "Alas!

"Not by magic but by toil,
Thine own son hath brought this spoil."

Then through door ajar there came
One, a stranger, bright with flame.

"Welcome!" said the father, "Come
Share the bounty of my home.

"We have plenty and to spare;
Oftenest the board is bare,

"Yet tonight a miracle!—"
But he spake satirical.

THE ANGEL AND THE BOY

"Nay, not so," the stranger said.

"Behold thy son as from the dead.

"Labor did'st thou teach him and
Drudgery to understand;

"But an angel's touch transformed
This, thy son, who hath performed

"The miracle thou seem'st to see,
By turning toil and drudgery

"To happiness and sweet content
Through visions that from heaven are sent.

"Who makes of life a toiler's way
Will get no more than drudge's pay;

"But he who keeps his goal in view
Will someday see his dreams come true.

"I am thy son. Henceforth in me
The angel would I always see,

"And seeing, guard my visions well,
And all my fears and hates expel,

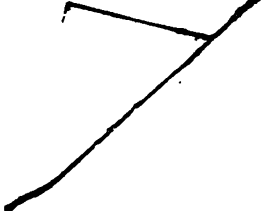
"And make of life a joyous thing
At which my heart may daily sing,

"Till work translated into art
Shall show 'twas but an angel's part."



MY WISH

Let me live in the Golden West
Folded close to its love-warm breast.
Let me breathe of its scented air
That cedar, magnolia and pine prepare.
Let me gaze on its hills sun-browned,
Lost in the rapture of scenes profound.
Let me gather fruition's charm
Cradled in sunshine that nothing can harm.
Here where Nature keeps Youth and Spring,
And fashions Creation of angel's wing;
Here where the air has a velvet hand—
Zephyrs it borrowed from Fairyland;
Streams molten silver to girdle the plain
Gurgling with gossip of some distant main;
Fountains that spring from the heart of the World
Under the mountains the hands of God hurled;
Land with the breath of Immortal Life,
Where Death finds a living and ceases its strife;
Land that so close to the heart of God lies,
It beats with the throbs of the Lord of the skies—
Oh, when I slip 'neath Life's curtains of rest,
Make me a couch in the Golden West!



WHO SIDES WITH GOD

He always wins who sides with God;
Beaten, perchance, for a period.

Buoyed by the forces none can move—
The deathless hosts of Truth and Love—

These are the troops invincible,
Phalanxed with faith and principle,

Climbing the heights victorious,
Seeing the vision glorious,

Uttering words oraculous,
Doing the deeds miraculous,

Saying as falls the smiting rod,
"He always wins who sides with God!"

THE DESERT PLACE

Come ye yourselves into a Desert Place and rest awhile—MARK 6, 31.

I

Let us to the Desert Place!
Away from the jangle of the world
To find the thing we lost—Self!
The Desert Place
Where every sound is melted into silence,
And grief stands muted as the grave;
Where poise turns passion into power,
And calm conquers every care;
Where hate is swallowed up in happiness,
And love is the open door to life;
Where self-control seeks out serenity,
And grace grows like a garden-flower;
Where rest runs rife,
And narrow vision into vastness breaks;
Where quietude quells every fear,
And danger dies for lack of foolish daring;
Where gladness glides into everything,
And goodness meets with God at the gateway of peace;
Where composure smiles at sin,
And death is lost in the understanding of Life.

II

What silent cities and monumental tombs
Lie under the sands of the Desert!
How pure the atmosphere!

THE DESERT PLACE

No veiling cloud ever comes between the face of God and Life.
How devouring the Desert's heat in the thoughtless day,
And yet with what rapidity it cools
In the reflecting night!
How smooth the Desert soil built of the amber-burnt sand!
Forever transparent is the azure sky.
But oh, how the sun takes on a blood-red hue
As the hurricane of Remorse rushes across the waste!
What penitence upon the faces pressed to the ground!
And yet 'tis but the glory of the Simoun
Redeeming with rebuking strength.
My prayers—those Men of the Desert—
That carry one across the trackless waste
Seem never quite so pallid as when
This whirlwind of sand beats against my soul.
My disdainful camels—Contentment and Control—
Arch their proud necks and press their noses into the fury.
My caravan of purposes and plans
Is heaped in sad confusion.

III

Then the deep silence
Answers to the silences within me.
What freedom now the fettered Wind commands!
And like a siren sings a new note of confidence to me.
The absence of life about me presages death.
But it is the death that precedes all living things.
How Islam seeks to make me yield my will
To that one Great Power that I may know Myself.
A Moslem faith foretells the Great and Silent One.

THE DESERT PLACE

But oh the joy when, rising from the storm,
A Christ comes urging that my will
Be blended with the will of the Divine,
Until above, beyond, and through all things
Law takes form and like some Lover
Stands ready to receive Life as its bride.

IV

How now the passive silence of sleep is felt
Following the active silence of communing spirits.
The curses of the dwelling-places
Turned into the blessings of the Desert!
Behold! a mirage! Fantastic sport of Nature!
Phantasmagoria to show me what Life holds
In store somewhere when back to it
I take my strengthened way.
What Pyramids of Passion Life has reared about me!
And, lying in the sands, the tongueless Sphinx,
All ears, will listen to my voice,
And answerless look on.
Its deep repose the puzzling proof of Immortality.
Ah, Life! Thou art so voluble
Because the tomb so reticent remains!

V

See how that Temple of Karnak rears itself!
Beaten by the sands, it is the ruinous riot of Genius.
What gay turquoise the sky reveals
Where sleeps in silence this ancient fane!

THE DESERT PLACE

How the solemn sands of sin have crumbled
Beneath the Winds of Time!
And every Dune of Desire wears the pallor of Death.
What worshippers of the Sun must we
As seekers of the Silence become!
How Rest would build me a Boat of Sleep
Out of the funeral velvet of the Night
To carry all my fears away,
Far away, down the mauve river of the Distant Valley.
Love slips about my neck the Lotus blossom—
Amulet of Eternal Youth.
How quickly one forgets the tiger-look
In the tawny eyes of the Desert!
And the desolation of its whitening sands
Is lost in the vision of its peace!
How the quiet soothes and stills!
How mad Ambition falls asleep
Within the restful arms of Weariness!
What conquests has the night that culls the calm
From out the day's disturbing strife!
How hot the sands beneath my tired feet,
And yet how cool the night air coming on!
Oh Desert Place bereft of all desire
Save one last longing of the Soul for rest!

VI

How sweet to be alone with Self
Where peaceful poise may come again
And strengthen with its sturdy props
Of patient promise and persistent plan of good!

THE DESERT PLACE

The cloudless vista of the Desert shows
My Better-self to me as some lost friend.
My hot hands tremble with emotion's thrill.
There will be roses yet again!
Unmindful of the scarlet stain of many a thorn
I dream of bloom, and hedges green,
And roses resting 'gainst my breast.
No more the Simoun with rebuking wind
Shall break upon me with alarm.
A sweet forgiveness and forgetfulness
Is surging through my heart.
The Desert is restoring what Life stole.
My unstopped ears, made deaf by noise of strife,
Are hearing sounds unheard by mortal ears.

VII

What preparation does the Silence make
For some great deed my dreams are hinting at!
The Silence, Stillness, Strength and Saving Sense
Of remoteness from all Life is upon me.
And yet what consecrated cemeteries may the Desert hold!
And what lessons to be learned when Life is lost!
How Beauty broods above a broken seed!
A crumbling temple, built by hands,
Less tragic is than any shuddering soul.
And creation seems no greater task
Than character-making by mankind.
The gargoyle in its architecture—Ennui.
Misunderstanding but the limitation of a Mind.
And knowledge merely intuition of the Soul.

THE DESERT PLACE

In every breast a hero dwelling.
And Life and History but biography,
And every biography the outpourings of some Soul.
The kiss of the Wind corrupting nothing.
The embrace of the Sun soiling no one.
With mother-love the marvel of Paradise,
And grandmother-love but mother-love gone to seed.
Where Life is perverted when we extract a laugh.
And where Life has been lived when its product is a tear.
That one can only be thrilled when touching Life.
And that to know Life we must be
Witnesses of many deaths.
That conversation is not safe, unless
It leave out people and deal most with things.
That excess is the only sin,
Whether it be the lamp of Life turned too high
And smoking with the soot of selfishness;
Or the wilful waste of Love in passion's heat
Until it has withered to ashes of roses.
How like a vine-clad hut in a Wilderness of Woe
Is the Soul!

VIII

Ye troubled men, when passions stir
It is that Life shall be by each one felt.
That when thoughts thrill, it is that every Soul
May see Life and be glad.
And that to be on speaking terms with one's-self
One must know Life.
That the magician intends to fool us,

THE DESERT PLACE

But that Truth knows no sleight of hand.
That Bashfulness has no message, but that Courage is an Orator.
That my lips hold more than a kiss.
That they are the royal gateway through which
The Spirit of Life must pass.
Be ready, therefore, oh my Heart
For the exit of the kingly visitor
And salute him with a gracious smile.
Up my Soul! Thou hast no time to kneel
Till prayers for the dead are heard!

IX

What morning-glories twine about my door
That were unnoticed till I emerged from the Desert!
Nor did I know my birds were songless
By reason of my darkened house.
And that my friends came not unto my door
Because there was no light within my home.
How every hate is hushed in the tomb!
For, having buried every idle desire,
I have witnessed the resurrection of Life.
Ah, me! What blessings found I in that Desert Place!—
Poise and Power, Serenity and Strength,
Courage and Calm, Glow and Gladness,
Peace and Purpose, and unfailing Faith!
And yet the humblest room within the plainest dwelling
May serve as some retreat where God and Self
May meet and ever more be Friends!

THE DEAREST OLD LADY

She's the dearest, old, old lady
In a plain alpaca gown,
With her blue eyes bright at eighty
'Neath the ringlets tumbling down.

And her manners are most courtly,
With a voice so soft and low,
That one dare not dream that shortly
Must its music cease to flow.

She has held fast to the roses
In her cheeks and in her heart;
She avers of all Life's poses,
Cheating Age is Time's best art.

She is still so wise and witty
That Youth gathers 'round to learn;
When she purrs some pleasing ditty,
She can make a lover yearn.

Every spot she treads seems royal,
And her chair is like a throne,
And her courtiers, always loyal,
Make her kingdom seem Love's own.

THE DEAREST OLD LADY

And they vie with one another,
To pay deference devout
To this queenly, saintly mother,
When with grace she moves about.

She's a dainty bit of Dresden—
To be cherished carefully—
That God let her spirit rest in
To be handled prayerfully.

And this dear, dear, old, old lady,
Dwelling on the borderland,
Holds that Life, kept cool and shady,
Never feels Time's wrinkled hand.

When the Angels shall have kissed her—
Though 'gainst this we long have prayed—
We shall wish that they had missed her,
That with us she might have stayed.

She's the dearest, old, old lady
In a plain alpaca gown,
With her blue eyes bright at eighty
'Neath the ringlets tumbling down.

And her manners are most courtly
With a voice so soft and low
That one dare not dream that shortly
Must its music cease to flow.

THE CROWD

The dusty smell of autumn is in the air.
The fall odors of decay with their far, far
Promise of regeneration are in my nostrils.
The great heart of Nature is breaking with pathos.
I am elbowing the crowd—
Mixture of Jew and Italian, Greek and Dane,
Slav and native—restless, beautiful Youth!
I am near enough to smell the sweat of them.
Oh the adorable mix of it all—Life and its loves!
And the indescribable rubbish—
Dust and dirt, disease and lust, poverty and vagrancy!
And the indestructible cement of hope
That holds the atoms together.
These unwashed animals closer to Nature
Than I, with my softer ways, ever seem to get.
I, the pale leaf, and sickly blossom, ready to fall;
While *they* threaten to climb Parnassus
With their poetic strides of health!

Oh the wonderful rough rock of it all!
And the sublime strength that overawes!
But what pathos in the spectacle
When some sensitive soul-tendril reaches out
To fasten itself upon the unsmoothed surfaces
Of such as these!
The darkness of their untutored minds

THE CROWD

Seemingly lessened by the unctuous voice
Of the free-thinker on the street-corner
Haranguing the multitude—
The anarchist, the socialist, the atheist,
The dreamer and the libertine.
Each with his message urging expression.
And the muddle of listening minds.
And yet the far reaches of aspiration
Of some lonely auditor, in and yet not of the crowd,
Who hears but does not harken;
Whose dreams of joy are unmoved
By any orator's tongue;
Who is as far from the wonderful rough of it all
As the carnation is from the rose;
Or the bust of Bruno on my mantel
From the touch of the throng!

And the unsuspecting mob putting up
With Time's old joke of disappointment;
Smothering the sighs of discontent under its curses;
Interpreting Life's calendar to mean the registering
Of á kick as we come in, and the jig as we go out of it;
The looking forward to another day of succor,
As the world eagerly looks forward to some new Savior;
Fussing with foibles and ignoring God;
The yesterdays draped with regrets;
The tomorrows framed in fears;
The golden day less welcome than the purple dusk;
The streaming ribbons of the sun gladly supplanted
By the funereal velvet of the night;

THE CROWD

The brow of Darkness bristling with adventure;
The wild girl of the Wind' kissing every man,
Who makes answer with some sensuous word;
And Lust, knowing that the Darkness
Mercifully hides every sin within its shadows,
Lurking near at hand to track it to its lair;
Hope, unquenchable and undying,
A haunting spectre, wearing the masking smile
That makes Life a little more tolerable;
A world of tinsel taking the place of a realm of gold.

And this crowd, so full of Life,
All oblivious of its meaning!
The forgotten friendly sky;
The overlooked stars of destiny;
The rotting woodlands with their messages
Of a fresh morning in Life;
The crumbling leaves—those trenchant tracts
The trees distribute with their gospels of gladness;
The awful silence of a moving spirit that writes
Its tomes of knowledge in an unknown tongue;
The unsolved riddles of the universe
With their hieroglyphic answers inscribed
Upon the common things of Life—
Joy waiting as the bridegroom of Woe;
Love, sitting in her gypsy tent of Time,
Reading the good fortunes in the fate lines
Of every broken heart;
Happiness hiding her blushing face
In every wayside flower;

THE CROWD

Delight drawing her laughter from a fountain of tears;
Truth peering through the eyes of every living thing,
And throbbing in each holy thought;
Immortality lifting life out of the dust,
And spiritualizing it into the delicate odors
Of woodbine and clover, and translating the story
Of the soil into sonnets of color and rhapsodies of form;
Virtue carrying unclaimed crowns
That would do honor to a king;
Goodness gliding through the dark with soft hands
To bless, as silently as the dripping dew;

The silken tassels of courage
Crowning acres of rustling corn;
The glory of the tangling tresses of the grass
Hiding the unbecoming nakedness of the earth;
Mysticism secreting itself within the symbols
Of perfumed censer and chalice of flower;
Fate pointing with her two lean hands
Upon the dial of Time to the horizons of heaven and earth;
The moss of memory clinging to every stone of sorrow
Lying beneath the tear-dripped trees
In the dark forest of tragedy;
The annunciation of a resurrection
In the silken shell of every chrysalis;
The aspiration of tongue-tied souls
In the music of chant or carol;
Monotony outwitted by the artist of the sky
Whose azure background never repeats
A sunset's glory;

THE CROWD

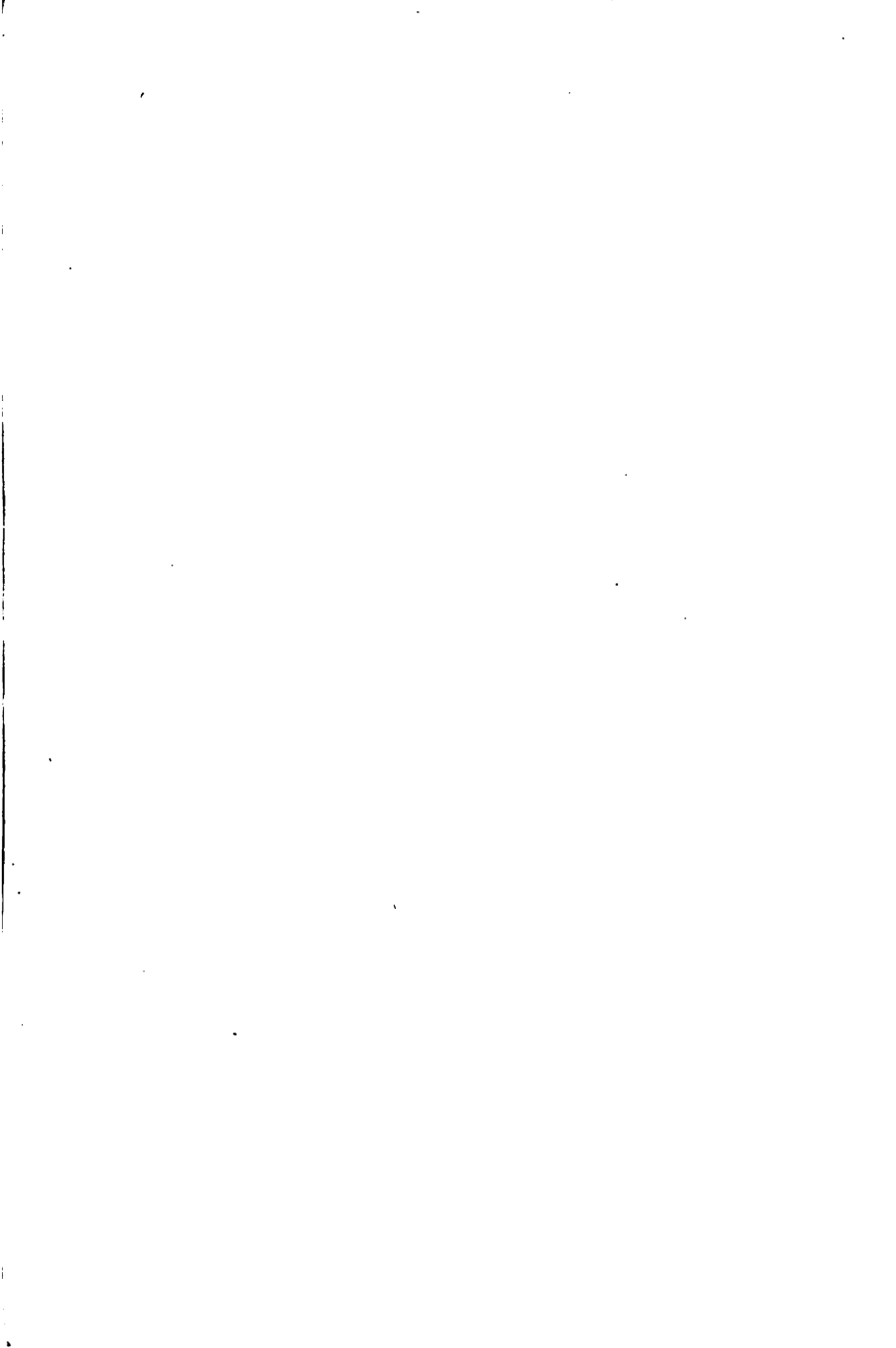
Mystery making her grimaces
To provoke a smile or a groan;
Satiety pointing to the seasons
As her excuse for playing the vagrant;
The birth of a babe, God's friendly way
Of introducing the family-circle of another world.

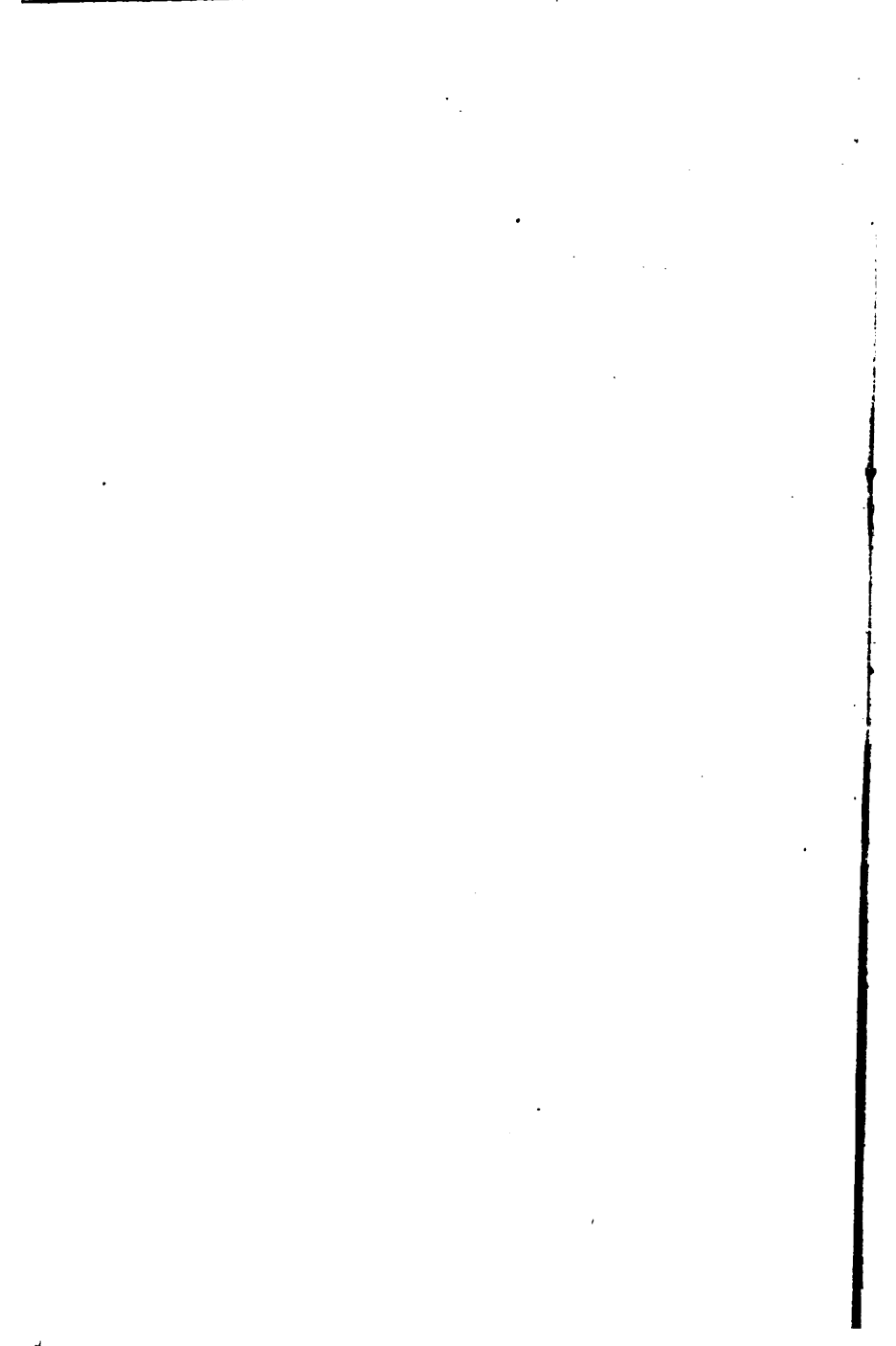
Then the dimpled and cooing beginning of Life
To be found, some day, lying on Death's hearth-stone
Amid the ashes of age;
The barter of all things, and the helpless bargainer
At the end of Life's day
In his little shop of cryptic mould unable to trade
His all for one miserable moment of Time;
Health with hurrying feet
Serving every guest at her table;
Pleasure, that penitent prodigal, hastening home;
Mirth mimicking Life, and ridiculing regret;
The eagle-beak of Remorse tearing to the quick;
Sin posing as a saint, and thieving as a tyrant;
Righteousness ruling a kingdom
Whose proudest products are peace and power
And plenty;
And man, stupid, blundering man,
Trampling his heritage under foot,
Or driving the chariot of Desire
With the horses of Death.
And a white moonbeam pouring its untouched
And untarnished silver upon the city's sneering streets
To be lost in the sickly, yellow light of Lust.

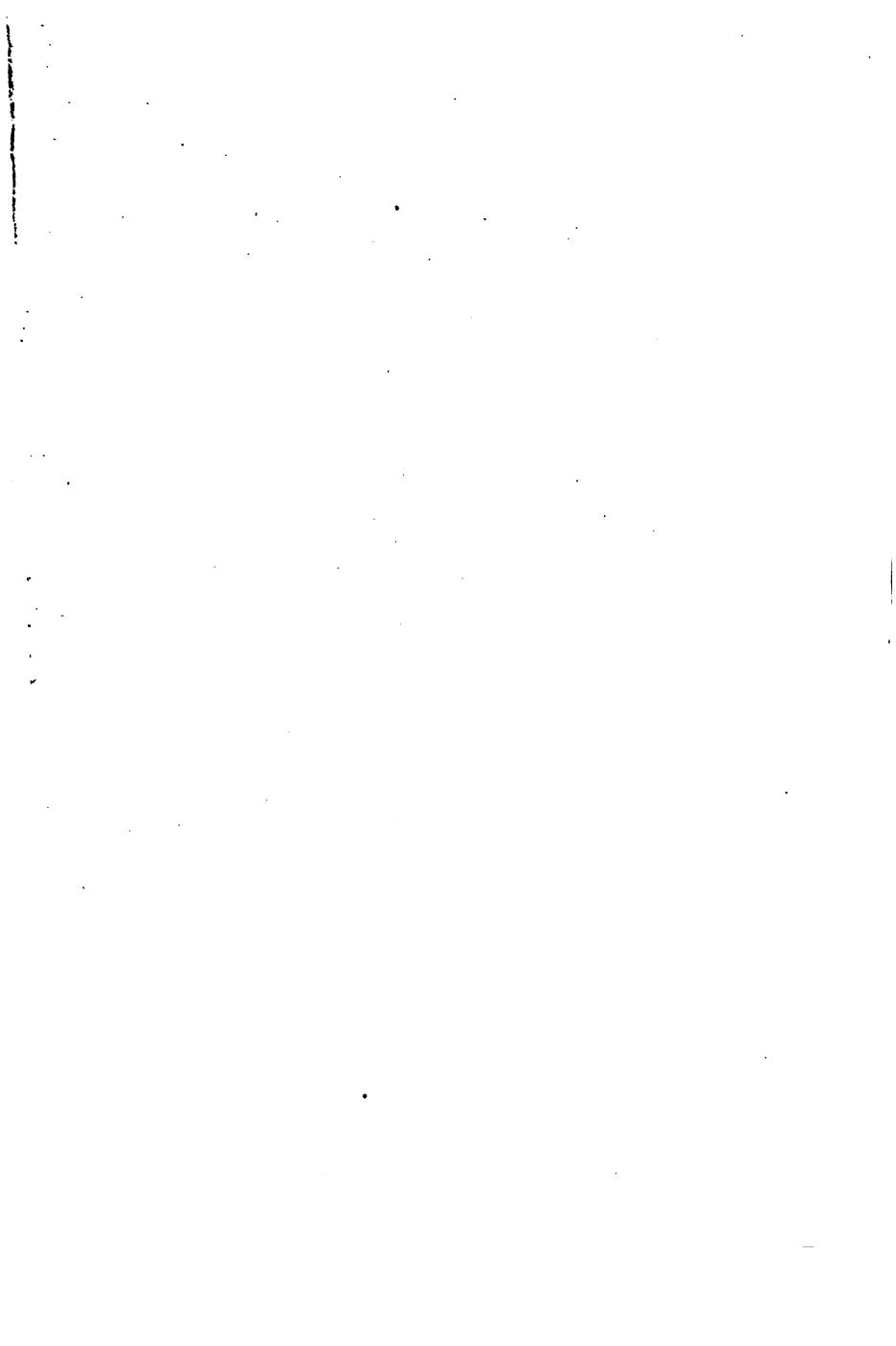
THE CROWD

I am elbowing the crowd!
I am a part of its frenzied current
That sweeps along Eternity's highway.
The electric start of it reaches me and thrills!
I have been moved!
God! how I have been moved!









**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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